



Dorothy K. Jessup

In recognition of your interest in
poetry, and in memory of

Katharine Lee Bates

June 9, 1952

Selected Poems
of

KATHARINE LEE BATES



Katharine Lee Bates

Selected Poems
of
KATHARINE LEE BATES

LATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
IN WELLESLEY COLLEGE

EDITED BY MARION PELTON GUILD



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

1930

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The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MANY of these poems come from two volumes now out of print: *America the Beautiful* and *The Retinue*. A considerable portion of the book is reprinted from *Yellow Clover: A Book of Remembrance for Katharine Coman*. Seven poems are taken from *Sigurd, Our Golden Collie*, by permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton and Company. Thanks are due to the Woman's Press of New York for generous permission to use a number of poems from *The Pilgrim Ship* and one from *Little Robin Stay-Behind*. Grateful acknowledgment should be made also for the use of individual later poems which have appeared in the following periodicals: *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Christian Century*, *The Churchman*, *The Church School Journal*, *The Congregationalist*, *Contemporary Verse*, *The Delineator*, *The House Beautiful*, *Lippincott's*, and *The Wellesley Alumnae Magazine*.

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FOREWORD

'My poems are my biography,' said Katharine Lee Bates, shortly before her death. The poems in this volume are selected from a much larger number, and chosen primarily for their beauty. But it is hoped that no new reader will fail to find in them what many have already found: 'the precious life-blood of a master-spirit.'

That spirit, so finely touched, so richly endowed, poured itself out in a wealth of fine and memorable issues. To the country at large, Miss Bates is known chiefly as the author of a great, if not our greatest, national hymn. But to the educational world of which she was a leading figure, her name stands for forty years of devoted and distinguished service to Wellesley College, from which she was graduated in 1880. After five years of successful preliminary teaching, four of them as first aid to the Misses Eastman in establishing the Dana Hall School, she returned to her Alma Mater in 1885, as an instructor in English Literature. In 1891 she became head of her department, a position which she retained until 1920, when signs of breaking health led her to welcome a lighter program. In that department, one of the largest in the college, she was associated with a group of scholars and writers of no ordinary quality, boasting among others such honored names as Vida Dutton Scudder, Sophie Jewett, and

Margaret Sherwood. But until her retirement in 1925, she was its star of stars. To her classes she became at once an inspiration and a joy. In the great wave of grief and love which followed her death a year ago, uncounted numbers of her former students bore witness to her ennobling influence, and to the surpassing skill with which she had led them by her own unique methods to what was most beautiful in literature and in life. Yet she was none the less a thorough, exact scholar, intolerant of superficiality and sham. She specialized in Shakespeare and the Elizabethan drama, and her reverent devotion to Gentle Will had almost the quality of religion. The meetings of her seminar in her own hospitable study, in genial fellowship of research and discussion, with her old friend Mr. Gamaliel Bradford for many years a welcome and happy guest, have a story all their own.

With her lifelong enthusiasm for 'silver-voicèd, far-eyed Learning,' Miss Bates combined marked constructive and executive gifts. Her practice of these had begun with the presidency of her college class, continuing, not only during its undergraduate years, but through the half-century since. Though from the beginning an able and inspiring leader, alike in regular class business and in audacious frolics which have gone down in the history of the college, she was far from confining herself to general interests. Though one of its younger members, she loved and served her class with the devotion of a mother to her children. Every one of them had an individual place in her heart, and was followed in later life with discriminating sympathy and affection. To those

who are left of her adoring Class of '80, Katharine Lee Bates will always remain President *in absentia*.

As a member of the Wellesley faculty, she was one of the prime forces in the growing life of a great institution. Her masterly development of her own department, on the firm foundation laid by Louise M. Hodgkins, was admirably described by Miss Scudder, in her eloquent address at the college memorial meeting for Miss Bates, an address to be found in full in the Memorial Supplement to the *Wellesley Alumnae Magazine*. In the general deliberations of the faculty also, Miss Bates played an important part. She often saw what needed to be done and how to do it; and her winning modesty of suggestion was matched by clarity and power of statement. Many an advance of undoubted value to her Alma Mater might be traced to her quiet initiative. There is little doubt that high executive position might have been hers had she so desired. But she had a deep sense of vocation elsewhere.

To very many of the Wellesley faculty and students, and to an ever-widening circle outside, she was most of all a friend; and her benignity of eye and smile was a sure index of the large, tender, catholic sympathies of the heart within. In some ways she remained always a child. The keen sensitiveness of childhood was hers to the end; and she shrank from a harsh word regarding persons or causes she held dear, as from a blow. But her deeper feelings were covered by gentle dignity, and by a courtesy almost Spanish in its punctiliousness. Her rich sense of humor also served as a ready shield, as well as an escape to playfulness for one to whom play was

an integral part of living. To genuine worth of mind or character she responded with enthusiasm. But she had a lively interest in people at large; nothing human could be foreign to such a spirit; and her 'equal port to high and low' was based on the deepest convictions. She not only prayed for brotherhood, but practised it. How she could love, in the closer sense, is a sacred remembrance to those of her inner circle who remain, and shines with tenderest lustre in her pearls of poems to Katharine Coman, many of which enrich this book. But the great yearning loving-kindness which went out to every living creature, in a thousand thoughtful and often quaintly original ministries, is known to all who knew her well. She became mother-confessor to a long succession of visitors, not only women, but men also, eager to pour out their aspirations and defeats, their joys and sorrows, to her patient, understanding heart. The letters of help and cheer, over which she toiled evenings, and often far into the night, are beyond all computation.

One looks back to her as a daily example of Christian living. She was by no means a fundamentalist, and in undergraduate days had been treated as a brilliant and beloved heretic. So little was it understood that her persistent inquiry into the grounds of religious belief came from a more deeply religious nature than some of those about her. Throughout her mature life, she continued to wrestle with such profound, unanswered problems as have beset many of the world's earnest thinkers. How vital was her struggle is admitted with frank sincerity in the latter part of her 'Corona of Sonnets.'

But against all backgrounds of uncertainty there stood out for her the supreme figure of Jesus Christ, her Leader and her Lord. To the end of her days she studied and brooded over His life. Out of that long study and brooding, as well as out of her quickening visit to the Holy Land, was written the lovely, deeply reverent series of poems entitled 'Shining Footsteps,' in her volume *The Pilgrim Ship*. Day by day she strove to follow in those footsteps. 'Faith, with me,' she said, 'is not so much belief as action.' Mistakes she undoubtedly made; she was but human. But when she had once found out a mistake, who so faithful and generous as she in atoning for it! As has been shown above, she was indeed a working member of that great spiritual world-union, the Fellowship of Love. And in one of her shorter, less familiar poems is this exquisite bit of self-revelation:

'One word her heart sufficed,
Scent of a hidden rose:
"Christ!"'

With all Miss Bates' varied interests, she led in the main, in a most honorable sense, a double life. She was at once, and very completely, the teacher and the author. Thirty-three published volumes, one of them posthumous, attest her industry as a writer. Among these are brilliant records of travel, such as her *Spanish Highways and Byways*, and the lately republished *From Gretna Green to Land's End*. One of her rarest books, *Sigurd, Our Golden Collie*, gave voice to her characteristic and intense delight in animals and birds. While chiefly the story of 'that flashing, bounding, golden companion,' who

endeared himself to generations of college girls as well as to his two fond mistresses, it has other tales hardly less appealing. Its author could find more interest and pleasure in one little Easter chick, than others might in a terraceful of peacocks. The list of her books includes also charming stories for children, particularly that of the two bewitching small Spaniards who lived on the Alhambra Hill; a long series of admirably edited English classics, including an especially scholarly edition of two plays by Thomas Heywood; and the seven volumes of poetry which, with *Sigurd*, are the heart of the whole collection.

For the essential nature of Katharine Lee Bates was, as has been justly emphasized since her death, that of the poet. She was not the typical college professor who also wrote verse; but the poet by divine right who was also a college professor. To those who knew her best, she was the creative artist: seeing life in pictures, hearing it in great natural rhythms or intoxicating lilts; feeling it with a zest or a poignancy far beyond the general. For all her gay and gracious humor, her thousand charming whimsies running into witty doggerel and bright audacities of rhyme, her every approach to real poetry was profoundly serious. It was plain that she felt it to be for her a true vocation, and believed that in it lay her most individual service to God and her fellowmen. A striking confirmation of this is found in the fact that in writing her great poem 'The Ideal,' though she meant it for every one, she was thinking of her own ideal *as a poet*. This is proved by observing that in *America the Beautiful*, her first published book of

verse, she classed 'The Ideal' with her poems on poetry, rather than, as would naturally have been expected, with those on the spiritual life. Like other artists, she craved expression in her own natural medium, and hungered for the solitude in which alone the concentration necessary to great imaginative effort can be achieved. But unlike some others, she had a New England conscience of the largest proportions, and was keenly awake to manifold calls in other directions. The full daily performance of academic duty was a *sine qua non*. A secondary educational work of much importance, her devoted and vital service to the Institute for Girls in Spain, took heavy toll of her time and strength. As her reputation grew, and it was found that she was an able and captivating speaker, she was often called upon for public addresses, and too rarely succeeded in saying no. Social and philanthropic claims increased rapidly; hospitality was not only a duty, but a demand of her inmost being; household and family interests must have their rightful attention. Her correspondence, always large and scrupulously handled, became in time overwhelming. What wonder that her chances for creative work were appallingly limited, and seemed many times about to vanish altogether!

But in her passion for her art she was a very Romeo.

'I am no pilot, but were *thou* as far
As that vast shore washed by the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.'

When she could slip away for solitary vigils among the hills, great was her rejoicing. Vacation weeks, when not spent in

travel or professional study, were for her weeks of intense application to writing, most happily anticipated; though too many of them were given, for practical considerations, to the lesser joys of prose. Days of minor illness or convalescence, lonely hours of night or early dawn, were gifts from high heaven for her blissful purpose. A long train ride or automobile ride by herself was likely to have lyrical results. (It surely speaks volumes for her unselfishness that she so rarely took such rides alone.) In her later years her Sunday mornings were religiously dedicated to that labor which for her was also prayer. And she would sometimes come down to receive her Sunday-afternoon callers with her singing-robcs almost visibly about her.

However her poetic accomplishment fell short of 'the depth and dream of her desire,' its sum is indeed remarkable. Her first volume of collected verse, *America the Beautiful and Other Poems*, is now out of print. But it contained many of her finest lyrics, besides the great hymn which has immortalized her name. Since its first appearance in nearly its present form in 1904, that hymn has steadily made headway by its own intrinsic excellence until it is now sung from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and has become the favorite of countless thinking Americans. As Mr. Bradford has beautifully said, 'It expresses the highest and deepest emotions of patriotism, not in any spirit of militant aggression and world-conquering imperialism, but with a profound gratitude and affection for the country, the government, and the traditions that have made us what we are.' But it was Miss Bates' earnest wish that

whatever further advance her hymn might make in the people's favor should be made on its merits alone; and she greatly deprecated any attempt to promote its cause by criticism of other national songs. The suggestion of rivalry with 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' though kindly meant, she felt to be especially unfortunate, and it was in no sense her own. To have seen how eagerly she sprang to her feet, even when far advanced in mortal illness, at the first notes of 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' and with what patriotic determination she held herself erect until its last strains had died away, would do much to make her true honor for it understood.

Her second volume of adult verse, *The Retinue and Other Poems*, consisted largely of war lyrics, most of which have recently been reproduced in *America the Dream*. *The Retinue* also is out of print. Two of the other volumes are for children: *Fairy Gold*, a book of charming songs, in which the writer's great heart and exuberant fancy have things all their own way, and *Little Robin Stay-Behind*, a series of delectable short plays, still in circulation. A fifth volume, *Yellow Clover: A Book of Remembrance for Katharine Coman*, is far from being known as widely as its exquisite quality deserves. Its author's ingrained modesty, always on guard against the slightest personal exploitation of her work, was in this case supplemented by the natural reserves of deep grief.

Katharine Coman, Miss Bates' closest friend, was Professor of History and Economics at Wellesley College. She died in 1915, in that upper room of the Scarab, her own Bohemia, from which her devoted comrade was to follow her fourteen

years later. Her noble beauty of person and character will long be held in affectionate remembrance by Wellesley women. Her poet wrote of her 'Brunhild splendor of youth'; and though of American birth and parentage, she did indeed bear herself like a daughter of Vikings. Her lofty strength, simplicity, and serenity make themselves felt throughout Miss Bates' lovely portraiture in 'A Mountain Soul.' And the grand Norland setting of 'At Holmenkollen,' with its vast reaches of landscape and skyscape, is a fitting background for the heroic appeal of courage and hope with which it closes. But the crowning tribute to Miss Coman's memory, and probably Miss Bates' crowning achievement in poetry, is the remarkable series of forty-nine sonnets which it is a special privilege and pleasure to reproduce in this volume.

A Corona, we are told, is a series of seven sonnets, bound together in an Italian fashion, by which the first line of each sonnet repeats the last of the one preceding, and the last line of the last sonnet repeats the first line of the first. Miss Bates, with all her wide reading, found in English poetry but one example of the Corona, that in Donne's series of 'Holy Sonnets.' But undeterred by its rarity, she chose this form as the one best suited to her purpose, and as she wrote on and on, produced what is in truth a seven-fold Corona, seven series of seven sonnets each, after the pattern aforesaid. This pattern, which seems to the ordinary mind so artificial, she followed with such consummate ease and naturalness that the whole work has an astonishing effect of the unstudied and the

spontaneous. Indeed she confessed to having done it easily. Only a poet of masterly technique and an ear long wonted to the finest music of English iambic pentameter could have produced such a result. Miss Coman's own beautiful simplicity seems to have informed the diction and the subject-matter of these sonnets. Where else would one find so lovely a tribute, so artlessly expressed, as in

'You are with me, sweet as daily bread,
Refreshing as cool water'?

'Your wild-bird heart that ever longed to roam,
That ever for the bluer distance yearned,
And on each bough of beauty was at home'?

One remembers how the poet, with the sweet shyness of a child confiding a cherished secret, pointed out one day that she had put the word 'joy' into every sonnet of the whole forty-nine. But behind such simplicities as these, and the eloquently-told life-story of the beloved, are revealed such heights and depths of triumph or heart-break, such profound questionings of the meaning of it all, as carry this great work far beyond the range of ordinary literature. Does not this nobly-sustained, seven-fold Corona justly rank with those other famous sonnet sequences, each of which, like this, commemorates the experience of a single supreme love?

The last volume of Miss Bates' verse to appear during her lifetime, *The Pilgrim Ship*, published by the Woman's Press of New York, is still in active circulation. At first glance a book of travel, it does indeed contain noble poetic results of her

journeyings in Palestine and Egypt with Miss Caroline Hazard, the dear comrade to whom it is dedicated; a close friend of many years, who is still proving her devoted affection in great and gracious ways of honor to the poet's memory. But its eagerly-welcomed grouping of the Christmas poems which Miss Bates was accustomed to send out as her holiday greetings year by year, and especially the considerable sequence of earnest studies of the life of Our Lord, already mentioned, make it a book of unusual spiritual appeal. It contains also her masterly Assyrian play, 'The Healing of Tobit,' based on the *Book of Tobit* in *The Apocrypha*. This delightful piece of work bears witness to its author's seasoned skill in dramatic construction, and to the power of characterization which could make dim, legendary figures from the very dawn of history appear as vitally alive, sometimes even as humorously alive, as people of every day. The play furnishes the great farewell speeches of Raphael the Archangel with which the present volume closes.

America the Dream, the distinguished posthumous work lately issued by the Crowell Company of New York, is a collection of the patriotic outpourings of a lifetime, aside from 'America the Beautiful,' and of historical narrative verse of rare charm. Those who have been disposed to think of Miss Bates as the author of her great hymn alone, can here realize the wealth of her output in patriotic directions, apart from her other rich and varied contributions to American poetry. The book bids fair to become a national classic.

The present volume of *Selected Poems* attempts to give the

cream of Miss Bates' important first collection, and of that portion of *The Retinue* not drawn upon for *America the Dream*. It manifestly repeats a considerable part of *Yellow Clover*, and contains also a number of poems from *The Pilgrim Ship*, so especially noteworthy or beloved that they simply could not be omitted; although, as has been said, that book is still in active circulation. And a group of highly characteristic bird and animal poems, from between the chapters of *Sigurd*, *Our Golden Collie*, has been included. One bird-song, which fairly sings itself, has been borrowed from *Little Robin*. A few later poems, some of them from periodicals of the day, have been added. *America the Dream* has been left to an undisturbed and richly-merited success.

In making these selections, special regard has been had to the spontaneity with which many of the finest of Miss Bates' poems have come into being. A striking example of this is her beautiful early lyric, 'Sleep,' written at nineteen, in one day, after a sleepless night. But the whole undertaking would have seemed presumptuous, save for the aid of a half-century of familiarity with Miss Bates' verse, and with her own judgment as to individual poems. The decisions have therefore been almost more a matter of memory than of choice.

Entirely aside from her own creative work, Miss Bates did her utmost to foster the interest of others in poetry. It was not only that she taught it to her classes, and taught it with insight and zeal. From the beginning, students or friends who showed any promise whatever in the writing of verse, were aided and encouraged by every means she could devise, and

their more successful efforts praised to the limit. The amount of amateur verse which was sent to her can never be estimated, or the hours she spent in patient, conscientious effort to find whatever was good in it, and answer the senders accordingly. More and more she was called on to act as a judge in poetical contests far and near. This too was time-consuming and laborious, but this too she did faithfully. She threw herself with tender joy into careful and thorough editing of poems by beloved friends who had passed on: notably those of Sophie Jewett and Josephine Preston Peabody.

But her constructive mind found out larger ways of serving her chosen art. She strove earnestly to make her Alma Mater a headquarters for the encouragement of contemporary poets and poetry, and in large measure succeeded. Through her initiative, with the aid of a liberal and poetry-loving alumna, courses of Poets' Readings were established at the college, in which most of our living, leading American poets have taken part, and some from across the sea. These gifted men and women have found at Wellesley a warmth of welcome which left nothing possible undone; their readings were received with heartfelt appreciation; and usually followed by receptions of happy informality, and dinners with hostesses of congenial tastes. It was pleasant to see the enthusiasm of poetically-minded young girls, who found themselves actually in the presence of Robert Frost or Vachel Lindsay or William Butler Yeats, or even the great Tagore in all his eastern picturesqueness; and listening to the music of these masters from their own honored lips. The after effects of such quick-

ening experiences must be in some cases momentous. It is good to know that these high privileges are to continue, and that the Katharine Lee Bates Poetry Fund is one of the established resources of Wellesley College, as well as the generous endowment of the chair of English Literature in the name of its most distinguished professor.¹

Most of the poets thus welcomed at the college found their way to the Scarab and its poet-mistress, and formed lasting friendships there. Yeats and Gibson from overseas, and from nearer home Bliss Carman, Frost, Lindsay, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Anna Hempstead Branch, Leonard Bacon, John Neihardt, the poet of the Indian Wars, are but a few of their number. Professor Neihardt wrote afterwards that his hour with Miss Bates was worth the long train-trip from St. Louis. But the charm of quiet talk with the great-hearted, great-minded occupant of that delightful study, with its friendly firelight playing over the cherished books and souvenirs of travel, with the bright-eyed elder sister dropping in for a word of greeting, with Sigurd or his shy successor Hamlet stealing up for a caress, — ah, who can recapture it!

Miss Bates was one of the founders of the New England Poetry Club, which she later served as president; and her wise policies and spirit of cordial fellowship were of great service in the development of the club life. She was also an

¹ Wellesley's auspicious visit from John Masefield, now Poet Laureate, is kept especially fresh in the college mind by his establishment there of two prize awards, one for poetry and one for prose. The Masefield Poetry Prize has been an incentive for many a young pilgrim on the road to Parnassus.

honored vice-president of the Boston Authors' Club, having declined the presidency.

But this friend of every poet, nay, of every human being, this singer of high music, has joined the choir invisible. In one of her rarest poems she wrote:

'We are our longing. Thus
Let Love remember us.'

The nature of her own deepest longing, both as a poet and as a servant of the Most High, is revealed in the supreme beauty of her chosen epitaph: 'I will sing a new song unto the Lord.'

MARION PELTON GUILD

LIFE

THE DEBT

Because the years are few, I must be glad;
Because the silence is so near, I sing;
'Twere ill to quit an inn where I have had
Such bounteous fare nor pay my reckoning.
I would not, from some gleaming parapet
Of Sirius or Vega, bend my gaze
On a remembered sparkle and regret
That from it thanklessly I went my ways
Up through the starry colonnades nor found
Violets in any Paradise more blue
Than those that blossomed on my own waste ground
Nor vespers sweeter than the robins knew.

Though earth be but an outpost of delight,
Heaven's wild frontier by tragedy beset,
Only a Shakespeare may her gifts requite,
Only a happy Raphael pay his debt.
Yet I, to whom, even as to these, are given
Cascading foam, emblazoned butterflies,
The moon's pearl chariot through the massed clouds driven,
And the divinity of loving eyes,
Would make my peace now with mine hostess Earth,
Give and take pardon for all brief annoy,
And toss her, far beneath my lodging's worth,
Poor that I am, a coin of golden joy.

THE IDEAL

By the promise of noon's blue splendor in the dawn's first
 silvery gleam,
By the song of the sea that compelleth the path of the rock-
 cleaving stream,
I summon thee, recreant dreamer, to rise and follow thy
 dream.

In the inmost core of thy being I am a burning fire,
From thine own altar-flame kindled in the hour when souls
 aspire,
For know that men's prayers shall be answered, and guard
 thy spirit's desire.

That which thou wouldst be thou must be, that which thou
 shalt be thou art;
As the oak, astir in the acorn, the dull earth rendeth
 apart,
Lo thou, the seed of thy longing, that breaketh and waketh
 the heart.

I am the cry of the night wind, startling thy traitorous
 sleep;
Moaning I echo thy music, and e'en while thou boastest to
 reap
Alien harvests, my anger resounds from the vehement deep.

I am the solitude folding thy soul in a sudden embrace.
Faint waxes the voice of thy fellow, wan the light on his face.
Life is as cloud-drift about thee alone in shelterless space.

I am the drawn sword barring the lanes thy mutinous feet
Vainly covet for greenness. Loitering pace or fleet,
Thine is the crag-path chosen. On the crest shall rest be
sweet.

I am thy strong consoler when the desolate human pain
Darkens upon thee, the azure outblotted by rush of the rain.
All thou dost cherish may perish; still shall thy quest remain.

Call me thy foe in thy passion; claim me in peace for thy
friend;

Yet bethink thee by lowland and upland, wherever thou
willest to wend,

I am thine Angel of Judgment; mine eyes thou must meet in
the end.

SPIRITS OF FLAME

Shining, stinging spirits of flame to whom in the moment's
meeting

Leap our souls, surprised by God in the daily commonplace,
Spirits that cleave our mortal through with swift, celestial
greeting,

Angel spirits that from the throng flash out on us face to
face!

Eyes that blunt the swords of the world, where we fight under
mist and glamour;

Tones that fall with a silver sound as of far, supernal chime,
Melting into its harmony the cry, the curse and the clamor;
Drops of eternity upon the craving thirst of time!

Only a word, and ye go your ways, for the errand burns
within you,

Votaries of the Voice that calls and speeding torches of
The Light that when the stars are drift of ashes shall continue;
Only for us to anoint your feet with the spikenard of our
love.

Rosewhite, holy spirits of flame that the heart's deep cham-
bers cherish,

Ye who fade from the sight to glow like sunrise upon the
dream,

Ye whose splendor shrivels the earth ere the day it is doomed
to perish,
Our souls leap up in your glance of fire to bless you, gleam to
gleam.

THE FELLOWSHIP

When brambles vex me sore and anguish me,
Then I remember those pale martyr feet
That trod on burning shares and drank the heat,
As it had been God's dew, with ecstasy.

And when some evanescent sunset glow
Renews the beauty-sting, I set my pride
On that great fellowship of those who know
The artist's yearning, yet are self-denied.

Feast me no feasts that for the few are spread,
With holy cup of brotherhood ungraced,
For though I sicken at my daily bread,
Bitter and black, I crave the human taste.

REST

The banners of the sunset are too bright;
Fairer the after-hour
When all the sky is flushed by fainter light
To a mysterious flower.
These robin troubadours are shrill as pain;
Sweeter the vespers where
Some thistle-bird lets slip a drowsy strain
Soft as a baby's prayer.

Let Aspiration fold her wings tonight,
Those shining wings forspent,
And sit with Peace before the ember-light
In sisterly content.
Let Love be gentle as old friendliness,
Nor Sorrow overmuch
Perturb the heart, that knows like a caress
Her long-accustomed touch.

POT – POURRI

Blush-colored roses
Droop with the day;
Melody closes,
Lips are clay;
But though beauties depart
Their aroma shall be
Sealed in my heart,
Pot-Pourri.

Humming-bird Joy,
Thistle-down Love,
Wisdom the Toy,
Sorrow the Dove
Fleet unto Death;
So treasure for me
Sweet of their breath,
Pot-Pourri.

Life, my garden
Ambrosial,
When the skies harden
And snowflakes fall,
Winter shall win a
Fragrancy,
Rose-leaves in a
Pot-Pourri.

SLEEP

I lay me down before the rustic gate
That opens on the shadowed land of sleep;
I famish for its dews and may not wait
To hear its rivers flowing, drowsy-deep.
I knock, O Sleep the Comforter! Again
My weakness faints unto thy great caress.
The circling thought beats blindly through the brain
With dull persistency of barren pain,
And draws uncertain doubting and distress
To prove that man unto himself is very weariness.

Upon these withered grasses is no rest;
Thy crimson-dotted mosses are denied.
I see thy wall in shining grapevines drest
But know that only on the further side
Droop low the purple clusters. Take me in!
I do not fear to trust myself to thee.
Waking and danger are of closer kin,
But what hast thou to do with grief or sin?
Imprisoned from myself, I wander free,
And no resplendent sun of noon grants such security.

I would not lie tonight so near the bars,
If to thy realm fair entrance I may find,

That through them I might see our mortal stars
And hear the passing of our earthly wind.
Not even would I wish some gentle friend
To lean against them with a loving face;
For rest and life were never willed to blend;
And as I watched the day unto its end,
So would I sleep the night without a trace
Not only of day's grievousness but even of its grace.

Spread not my couch within thy garden beds
Where fairy forms from out the blossoms glance
And catch the yellow moonlight on their heads
To shift it swiftly in the swaying dance,
Nor wrap my limbs in thine enchanted cloak
Beneath the tree whose hollow shadows teem
With changing faces of fantastic folk
And dim, dissolving shapes, — thy wizard oak
Whose every leaf conceals a druid dream,
Whose dipping boughs disturb thy hushed and holy stream.

But take me to thy kingdom's very heart,
O solemn Sleep, with thee alone to dwell.
In deepest grotto hide me, far apart
From tone or touch and guard mine eyelids well.
Yea, charm the tired senses deaf and blind
And let me there lie face to face with thee;
So shall the morning cleave the clouds to find
Thy fragrance clinging to my waking mind,

But what thy lips did whisper unto me
I'll bear too fine for consciousness, too deep for memory.

Then call my footsteps in, O silent warden,
For even as I plead, night waxes late.
Call me to rest within thy well-walled garden
And lift the latches of the rustic gate.
Others have won where I may not avail;
Childhood and age by countless millions pass;
Ay, guilty feet press on where mine must fail,
For thou art kind as Death. The faces pale
Of myriad sleepers gleam in thy sweet grass,
And only I am left without to weep and cry, Alas!

Yet thou wilt take me in with all the rest,
And walk among us in thine angelhood;
And we shall wake and know we have been blessed,
If unaware, and that thy presence stood
In tenderness by each spent son of earth
To make us spirit-sons of God once more.
With plenty wilt thou satisfy the dearth,
With strength the weakness, and another birth
Shall each white dawn unto our souls restore,
The gate whereby we leave thy land a new life's open door.

THE NEW YEAR

Long foretold by those prophets old,
The sun, the moon and the stars,
The New Year waits at Time's high gates
And clashes the golden bars;
And the soul of the world awakens and gropes
In a twilight wonder of fears and hopes,
As a new wave breaks on the beaten shores,
As a new foot falls on the trodden floors,
And a New Year stands with uplifted hands
In the light of the opened doors.

All uncrowned, with his hair unbound,
His white hair loose on the wind,
The Old Year goes to his long repose,
But he casts his gifts behind.
With glimmer of tears and flicker of smile
He takes his place in the pilgrim file
Of the dim-eyed years who journey along,
Shrilling us back a discordant song
That mingles and blends with the distance and ends
In a harmony soft and strong.

Long foretold, in the morning cold,
With pain and music and mirth
The New Year gleams on the broken dreams
Of the fast-revolving earth;

A secret, a change and a mystery,
What hath not been and what is to be,
Nourished and cherished and hidden away,
Saved by Time for this ripening day,
To work a deed forever decreed
And a mission it must obey.

All unknown, it is thou alone
Who canst tell thine errand aright, —
A whispered thought when the world was not,
And a sign made in the night.
Far from the touch of our vain surmise
In thy folded hours thy meaning lies,
To some for blessing, to some for curse;
Yet none would thy destined dawn disperse,
For it works in the plan that is more than man
And is well for the universe.

BRIEF LIFE

Brief as the creaming waves that break and run
Back to the deep, as butterflies that flutter
From flower to flower, as icicles that glitter
Their keen defiance to the fatal sun;
Brief as from tiny breast of cinnamon
The bluebird's warble, or the swallow's twitter,
This life of ours. Though it be sweet or bitter,
'Tis but a wing-beat and the flight is done.
Yet on the lip the billow's windy froth
Tastes of the sea; summer is in the call
Of bird, in airy motion of the moth.
There sparkles in that fragile crystal lance
The miracle of light. 'Tis but a glance
And we are gone; yet the least life holds all.

WHITE MOMENTS

The best of life, what is it but white moments?

Those swift illuminations when we see
The flying shadows on the fragrant meadows
As God beholds them from eternity; —

White moments, when the bliss-of-being worships,
And fear and shame are heretics that burn
In holy fire of exquisite desire
For love's surrender and for love's return;

White moments, when a Power above the artist
Catches his plodding chisel, sets it free,
And from each urgent stroke there springs emergent
The wayward grace that laughs at industry;

White moments, when the drowsing soul, sense-muffled,
Is stung awake by some keen arrow-flight,
And rends the bestial, claiming its celestial
Succession in the lineage of light;

White moments, when the spirit, long confronted
By all the bitter formulæ of fate,
Inveterate romancer, finds its answer
In some mysterious faith inviolate;

White moments, when the silence steals on sorrow,
And in that hush the heart becomes aware
Of wings that brood it, visions that seclude it
Forevermore from folly, fear and care.

The best of life, what is it but white moments?
Freedoms that break the chain and fling the load,
Irradiations, ardors, consecrations,
— The starry shrines along our pilgrim road.

TIME

They see amiss who picture Time as old,
A stooping baldpate with his wrinkled hand
Clutched on a scythe. Not so I understand
My comrade of a lifetime, who has told
This listening heart from childhood manifold
Strange stories of the past, as through the land
We ran together, while the glad winds fanned
Back from his forehead locks of youthful gold.
But these my mortal limbs may not much longer
Maintain the ardor of his quickening pace;
I find him ever younger, swifter, stronger,
Singing no more of strifes and splendors gone,
But panting for the goal of his great race
As the importunate vision sweeps him on.

‘A GOOD HEART BREAKS BAD LUCK’

If one of us two must break, — the luck that seeded my sky
With stars malign, or this heart of mine, I swear it sha’n’t be I.

He has pain and age at his back, crosses and frets enough;
I have laughter and love and a spirit of unconquerable stuff.

He has flouted my every step all day on the windy wold;
A knave in grain, he has blurred my brain and fooled me
with fairy gold.

All wrestle-stained I shall come to the inn where the journey
ends,
With an empty scrip, but a song on my lip that may happen
to make amends.

THE ETIQUETTE OF THE PALACE

'As I might, I put my trouble from me, for in a King's dwelling was I.' — EDDA

Dancing feet for palace floors
Of enameled glow;
Through the carved ivory doors
Debonairly go;
Feast it whether the red wine flow
Sweet or bitter, for we know
Guests must trust the hand that pours.
Manners ho!

Knights of rueful countenance
Gloom the amber hall
Where in praise of Dame Romance
Dulcet harpings fall.
Turn your wounds against the wall;
Cover, when the revels call,
Bleeding heart with laughing glance,
Gentles all.

Should your spear in tourney break,
Be the first to weave
Garlands for the victor's sake;
And at shut of eve
If the usher touch your sleeve
Gracefully the hint receive.
Kiss your hand to Life and take
Courtly leave.

THE MEED FOR A MAN

Life, Vicegerent of God,
What is the meed for a man
Who has done his work with a will,
Labored in shower and sun,
Hardened his dream to a plan,
Driven his plan into deed,
Made fruitful the earth he trod;
Whose city is set on a hill,
Whose crown of honor is won?
What is the toiler's meed?

Life, Vicegerent of God,
Smiles, though his mouth is grim.
'Since struggle hath made him strong,
A leader and shaper of men,
This is the meed for him,
Another and harder task.
Once more shall his feet be shod
For the heavy trail and long.
Having served, he shall serve again,
Sole meed that high hearts ask.'

THOU KNOWEST

Thou knowest, Thou who art the soul of all
Selfless endeavor, how I longed to make
This deed of mine, adventured for love's sake,
Thy deed — sweet grapes upon a sunny wall,
A rose whose petals into fragrance fall,
A glint of heaven glassed in some lonely lake
Amidst the heather and the fringing brake,
Our secret — ah, Thou knowest. Though it call
Only for pardon, still to Thee I bring
My poor, shamed deed that craved the beautiful,
To Thee, the Master-Artist, who alone
Wilt of Thy grace see in this graceless thing
The pattern marred by the imperfect tool,
And know that dim, wronged pattern for Thine own.

ALMA MATER

I who once was a grief, once was a child's white bier,
Was a passion of loss, wild strife
In a desolate heart reft of its dream, am here,
Gracious Mother of Life.

I, a Queen of the Quest, leading my endless train,
Would forever my witness bear,
— Waters out of the rock, sweetness from bitter pain,
Blessing born of despair.

Grief is ashes and dust, cast on the winds that play
Over infinite toss of tides.
Who shall gather it up, lost in the sparkling spray?
Only Beauty abides.

THE LIBRARY

AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE

Here shall the walls be wrought
And the stately fabric gleam,
A court for the kings of thought
And the emperors of dream.
Though the forms they wore are gone
Like shadow of flying bird,
Their spirits are clothed upon
With the immortal word.

Here the laurelled brotherhood,
Like the stars in primal dance,
Shall praise what God found good
With golden iterance;
And the sages from east to west
And the prophets of burning lip
Shall welcome us to the test
Of their great fellowship.

Here shall be garnered the fruit
Of the mystical cosmic tree
That gropes with its craving root
Where the waters of wisdom be;
And the burden of hearts that broke
'Neath the oracles too sublime,

And lore of the nameless folk,
The treasure-trove of time.

Here shall clarion voices call
The crescent soul to joy,
And hands of healing fall
On feverish annoy;
Visions shall come and go
On the dreaming eyes of youth,
And here shall her chosen know
The countenance of Truth.

BEYOND

WHAT IS THE SPIRIT?

I

What is the spirit? Nay,
We know not — star in clay.

We know not, yet we trust
The dream within the dust.

We trust not, yet we hark
The song within the dark.

II

These few bewildered days
Ask little blame or praise.

All mortal deeds go by
As cloudlets down the sky.

We are our longing. Thus
Let Love remember us.

III

We know not whither beat
Its wings, nor what defeat

Death's mighty muffling glooms
May cast on fluttering plumes,

Or if it be success —
That folded quietness.

IV

When like a flaming scroll
Earth shrivels, if the soul

Should those fierce heats outwear,
What of ourselves were there?

A longing bruised and dim,
A seed of seraphim.

AZRAEL

Of all the angels whose melodious breath
The Sapphire Throne with praise encompasseth,
Amid that rainbow-plumed, ecstatic choir
Most beautiful art thou, benignant Death:

For we who dwell beneath this cloudy tent
Some changing years, are all too early spent
By covert griefs that fret the heart like fire,
Our staffs soon broken and our sandals rent.

Though sweet the grace of moon-enchanted night,
And day in blue serenities of light,
Matched with the joys of sense, our souls rise higher,
And tears may shut the sparkling stars from sight.

But soon, ah, soon the touch of thy chill palm
Falls on the fevered heart like healing balm,
And fitful bliss, keen anguish, wild desire,
Lie hushed together in most holy calm.

What though thy cup, with dark devices chased,
Strike pallor down the lip, to mortal taste
So passing bitter with the Stygian mire
And nightshade plucked on sad Cimmerian waste?

What though thou comest all in shadow stoled?
Are there not instants when that sable fold,
 Blown by the flame of the funereal pyre,
Emits a gleam of bright, celestial gold?

Gloom-mantled herald of the light to be,
Thy dusky wings that spread from sea to sea
 Hide us from evil, and thy sword, though dire
The sweeping blade, sets sorrow's captives free.

Of all the angels whose melodious breath
The Sapphire Throne with praise encompasseth,
 Amid that rainbow-plumed, ecstatic choir
Most beautiful art thou, benignant Death.

YESTERDAY'S GRIEF

The rain that fell a yesterday is ruby on the roses,
Silver on the poplar-leaf and gold on willow-stem;
The grief that chanced a yesterday is silence that encloses
Holy loves where time and change shall never trouble them.

The rain that fell a yesterday makes all the hillside glisten,
Coral on the laurel and beryl on the grass;
The grief that chanced a yesterday has taught the soul to
listen
For whispers of eternity in all the winds that pass.

O faint-of-heart, storm-beaten, this rain will gleam to-
morrow
Flame within the columbine and jewels on the thorn,
Heaven in the forget-me-not; though sorrow now be sorrow,
Yet sorrow shall be beauty in the magic of the morn.

'THE REST IS SILENCE'

I

The shadow of Death's wing had fallen grey
Upon her face, the mother-face, our star
Of home since life first read its calendar
Within her smiles; we felt her slip away,
Our vain hold clinging to an empty clay,
Down that hushed valley where the white mists are,
On to its utmost verge, so far, so far
That her return was but as spirits may
Briefly revisit earth. For oh, she shone
Transfigured, yet so winsome, that our awe
Was blended with her own beatitude.
The burden of her fourscore years was gone;
Escaped from Time, she mocked his mighty law;
Her children looked upon her maidenhood.

II

Eager and shy, as when among her peers
A girl will pour her confidence, she told
In voice where laughter ran a thread of gold
A history all novel to our ears.
Her blissful eyes oblivious of tears,
With lingering touch she one by one unrolled
Her bridal memories from fold on fold
Of fragrant silence. Dead these fifty years

Was he with whom, young hand in hand, she went
To their first home, which simple neighbor-folk
Had filled with garden-bloom and forest scent;
Yet still of him, and that June path they fared,
Those welcoming flowers, her failing accents spoke;
— Of how Love led her to a place prepared.

III

When the bruised heart, bewildered first and numb,
Quickened to pain, how passing strange it seemed
To miss her comfort! She, who still esteemed
Old lore above the schools, would she not come
With potency of hoarded balsamum,
To heal the hurt? Thus craving her, I dreamed.
Before me, sundering east from west, there gleamed
A marble wall, illimitable, dumb,
A blank of white! when lo, her own sweet face,
With no more halo than the crispy lace
I knew so well, from sudden casement smiled,
— Her blithe, audacious self, infringing so
With stolen peep Death's new punctilio,
Breaking his code to reassure her child.

THIS TATTERED CATECHISM

This tattered catechism weaves a spell,
Invoking from the Long Ago a child
Who deemed her fledgling soul so sin-defiled
She practised with a candle-flame at hell,
Burning small fingers, that would still rebel
And flinch from fire. Forsooth not all beguiled
By hymn and sermon, when her mother smiled,
That smile was fashioning an infidel.
'If I'm in hell,' the baby logic ran,
'Mother will hear me cry and come for me.
If God says no — I don't believe He can
Say no to mother.' Then at that dear knee
She knelt demure, a little Puritan
Whose faith in love had wrecked theology.

THRENODY

FOR SOPHIE JEWETT

Keeping the lonely watch for thee, for thee
Whose year's novitiate of Paradise
To all our longing is but mystery,
I saw a silver dawn. The sacrifice
Glowed from a cloud-veiled altar, while there fled
A troop of white, adoring lustres by,
So fair, so fain, that mortal grief retreated
As an intruder on that orient sky;
And joy came thrilling through the morning's breath,
Perchance a greeting from thy bliss of death.

If it be slumber as we saw thee sleep,
Flushed with the loveliness of life, but blest
From pain and sorrow, sinking still more deep
Into some soft profound of utter rest;
A slumber mystical as this, entrancing
Forevermore in crystal, hid repose
The face from which a thousand lights went glancing,
Swift hands so quiet 'neath their faded rose,
By all the nights we have found slumber sweet,
Shall we not trust that dove-winged Paraclete?

Thou art not of the shadows, ah, not thou,
Our Dryad soul, the soul of April woods

Where flames of color, caught from bough to bough,
And winds of fragrance blend beatitudes.
Not in the withered groves whose phantoms follow
Like drifted leaves the feet of Proserpine,
Not in the whispering midnights dim and hollow
Shall love re-capture that lost grace of thine;
Beauty and light are with thee where thou art;
We grope thy pathway by the haunted heart.

If death be life, again the vibrant stress
Of joy and hope, wonder and love and dream,
An ecstasy more poignant, yet no less
A beat of baffled wings, a fading gleam;
The urge of the Eternal through a higher
Rapture of being, thou who lovedst so
This earth-adventure, thou whose last desire
Yearned toward thine Italy, dost thou not go
With shining steps to find that fairer star,
Blithe of the journey as God's pilgrims are?

On golden streets I can not hear thy tread,
Nor deem how tenderest touch, albeit divine,
May wipe away the tears which still were shed,
Our Pitiful, for every woe but thine.
Nay, is it sweeter, Dear, that hidden manna,
Than was our daily bread to thee, to thee
Whose voice must falter in the glad hosanna,
While the Four Angels hurt the earth and sea?

Draw near St. Francis till the doom is done.
Of that fourth trumpet darkening Brother Sun.

Thy crown of life, resplendent with the sheen
Of clustered stars or rainbow though it be,
Wouldst thou not change for woven one of green
Plucked from the branches of that holy tree
Whose leaves are for the healing of the nations?
Dost thou not watch from heaven's untroubled height
With wistful eyes thy restless earth's mutations,
Its colored day, its blur and blot of night,
Till God hath smiled thee forth with Raphael
To minister once more where mortals dwell?

If death hath done its worst, — annulled the soul;
If thou art vanished like a bubble, blown,
To praise the light one instant; if the goal
Of all our striving is oblivion;
Alas, our thrush, can happiness be wrested
From love so smitten desolate, — can they,
The summer boughs wherein thy music nested,
Be glad of song when song is flown away?
Can stormy wind and hail, that slay the bird,
Fulfil in us His great, exultant word?

Perchance not God Himself can slay the soul
That is Himself in myriad avatar;
Disguised in dust, we wear the aureole
Of His divinity; in Him we are.

When by His thunder-stroke the veil was riven,
This glamour of the senses we misname,
Didst thou, O spirit from His splendor given,
Ray of His glory, meet Him in the flame?
Even while we keep this dream of sky and sod,
Are we not with thee in the heart of God?

The book of death, though sealed with seven seals,
Is in the hand of Him upon the throne,
And as a father with his children deals,
So the All-Father pitieth His own.
Yea, peradventure as a father covers
Some rare surprisal till the gift-dawn be,
The silent cloud that o'er our pathway hovers
Shieldeth strange joy, familiar now to thee,
To thee, our fleet forerunner, who hast made
Nearness of distance, radiance of shade.

THE GATES OF DEATH

Marmoreal, impregnable,
Immutable, we bear
The searching shafts of human thought,
The onset of despair.
The indistinguishable cell
Of spirit and of brain
Through all the centuries has fought
Its puny fight in vain.

The pageant of humanity
Dissolves as on it falls
The shadow of our bulwarks dense,
Our unrevealing walls.
Its starcraft is but vanity.
Its aspen faith but blows
In winds whose whither and whose whence
No mind of mortal knows.

Yet is there one strong battle-lord
Who still the day retrieves.
Ashes and dust are infidel;
His very life believes.
Forever is his only word.
Breath is incredulous,
But Love, undaunted, terrible,
Demands his own of us.

IMMORTALITY

The Angel of the Sun
Had spread a wing of flame
Athwart the orient sky;
Then grew my spirit one
With Beauty and became
A Joy that could not die.

At some far torch of gold
The shining soul was lit
And claims celestial kin.
Shadows its house enfold,
But are not one with it.
The splendor bides within.

Sorrow and vain desire
Are drifts of darkness gone
Upon the ebb of night.
Spark of the primal fire,
Bliss wakens with the dawn,
Light answering to light.

FUR AND FEATHERS

SIGURD'S MEDITATIONS IN THE CHURCH-PORCH

The gaze of a dog is blind
To splendors of summit and sky,
 Ocean and isle,
But never a painter shall find
The beautiful more than I
 In my lady's smile.

The thought of a dog is dim.
Not even a wag he deigns
 To the wisest book.
Philosophy dwells for him
In loving the law that reigns
 In voice, in look.

The heart of a dog is meek.
He places his utter trust
 In a mortal grace,
Contented his God to seek
In a creature framed of dust
 With a dreaming face.

The human is our divine.
In the porch of the church, I pray
 For a rustling dress,

For those dear, swift steps of thine,
Whose path is my perfect way
Of holiness.

TO SIGURD

Not one blithe leap of welcome? Can you lie
Under this woodland mold,
More still
Than broken daffodil,
When I,
Home from too long a roving,
Come up the silent hill?
Dear, wistful eyes,
White ruff and windy gold
Of collie coat so oft caressed,
Not one quick thrill
In snowy breast,
One spring of jubilant surprise,
One ecstasy of loving?

Are all our frolics ended? Never more
Those royal romps of old,
When one,
Playfellow of the sun,
Would pour
Adventures and romances
Into a morning run;
Off and away,
A flying glint of gold,
Startling to wing a husky choir

Of crows whose dun
Shadows would tire
Even that wild speed? Unscared to-day
They hold their weird seances.

Ever you dreamed, legs twitching, you would catch
A crow, O leaper bold,
Next time,
Or chase to branch sublime
That batch
Of squirrels daring capture
In saucy pantomime;
Till one spring dawn,
Resting amid the gold
Of crocuses, Death stole on you
From that far clime
Where dreams come true,
And left upon the starry lawn
Your form without your rapture.

And was Death's whistle then so wondrous sweet
Across the glimmering wold
That you
Would trustfully pursue
Strange feet?
When I was gone, each morrow
You sought our old haunts through,
Slower to play,



COLLIE COMRADESHIP

Drooping in faded gold.
Now it is mine to grieve and miss
My comrade true,
Who used to kiss
With eager tongue such tears away,
Coaxing a smile from sorrow.

I know not what life is, nor what is death,
Nor how vast Heaven may hold
All this
Earth-beauty and earth-bliss.
Christ saith
That not a sparrow falleth
— O songs of sparrow faith! —
But God is there.
May not a leap of gold
Yet greet me on some gladder hill,
A shining wraith,
Rejoicing still,
As in those hours we found so fair,
To follow where love calleth?

LADDIE

Lowly the soul that waits
At the white, celestial gates,
A threshold soul to greet
Belovèd feet.

Down the streets that are beams of sun
Cherubim children run;
They welcome it from the wall;
Their voices call.

But the Warder saith: 'Nay, this
Is the City of Holy Bliss.
What claim canst thou make good
To angelhood?'

'Joy,' answereth it from eyes
That are amber ecstasies,
Listening, alert, elate,
Before the gate.

*Oh, how the frolic feet
On lonely memory beat!
What rapture in a run
'Twixt snow and sun!*

'Nay, brother of the sod,
What part hast thou in God?
What spirit art thou of?'
It answers: 'Love.'

Lifting its head, no less
Cajoling a caress,
Our winsome collie wraith,
Than in glad faith

The door will open wide,
Or kind voice bid: 'Abide,
A threshold soul to greet
The longed-for feet.'

*Ah, Keeper of the Portal,
If Love be not immortal,
If Joy be not divine,
What prayer is mine?*

VIGI

Wisest of dogs was Vigi, a tawny-coated hound
That King Olaf, warring over green hills of Ireland, found;
His merry Norse were driving away a mighty herd
For feasts upon the dragonships, when an isleman dared a
word:

‘From all those stolen hundreds, well might ye spare my
score.’

‘Ay, take them,’ quoth the gamesome king, ‘but not a heifer
more.

Choose out thine own, nor hinder us; yet choose without a
slip.’

The isleman laughed and whistled, his finger at his lip.

Oh, swift the bright-eyed Vigi went darting through the herd
And singled out his master’s neat with a nose that never
erred,

And drave the star-marked twenty forth, to the wonder of the
king,

Who bought the hound right honestly, at the price of a broad
gold ring.

If the herd-dog dreamed of an Irish voice and of cattle on the
hill,

He told it not to Olaf the King, whose will was Vigi’s will,

But followed him far in faithful love and bravely helped him
win
His famous fight with Thorir Hart and Raud, the wizard
Finn.

Above the clamor and the clang shrill sounded Vigi's bark,
And when the groaning ship of Raud drew seaward to the
dark,
And Thorir Hart leapt to the land, bidding his rowers live
Who could, Olaf and Vigi strained hard on the fugitive.

'Twas Vigi caught the runner's heel and stayed the wind-
swift flight
Till Olaf's well-hurled spear had changed the day to endless
night
For Thorir Hart, but not before his sword had stung the
hound,
Whom the heroes bore on shield to ship, all grieving for his
wound.

Now proud of heart was Vigi to be borne to ship on shield,
And many a day thereafter, when the bitter thrust was
healed,
Would the dog leap up on the Vikings and coax with his
Irish wit
Till 'mid laughter a shield was leveled, and Vigi rode on it.

THE DOGS OF BETHLEHEM

Many a starry night had they known,
Melampo, Lupina and Cubilōn,
 Shepherd-dogs, keeping
 The flocks, unsleeping,
Serving their masters for crust and bone.

Many a starlight but never like this,
For star on star was a chrysalis
 Whence there went soaring
 A winged, adoring
Splendor outpouring a carol of bliss.

Sniffing and bristling the gaunt dogs stood,
Till the seraphs, who smiled at their hardihood,
 Calmed their panic
 With talismanic
Touches like wind in the underwood

In the dust of the road like gold-dust blown,
Melampo, Lupina and Cubilōn
 Saw strange kings, faring
 On camels, bearing
Treasure too bright for a mortal throne.

Shepherds three on their crooks a-leap
Sped after the kings up the rugged steep
 To Bethlehem; only
 The dogs, left lonely,
Stayed by the fold and guarded the sheep.

Faithful, grim hearts! The marvellous glow
Flooded e'en these with its overflow,
 Wolfishness turning
 Into a yearning
To worship the highest a dog may know.

When dawn brought the shepherds, each to his own,
Melampo, Lupina and Cubilōn
 Bounded to meet them,
 Frolicked to greet them,
Eager to serve them for love alone.

THE JESTER

Myths from earth's childhood tell
Of Godhood visible, —
Indra, the azure-skied,
Four-handed, thousand-eyed;
Far-wandering Isis, chief
Lady of Love and Grief;
Zeus, on each rash revolt
Hurling the thunderbolt;
Woden of warrior form
Gray-mantled with the storm;
Lir of the foam-white hair,
Mad with the sea's despair.

But of those Splendors who
Conceived the kangaroo,
With gesture humorous
Shaped hippopotamus,
Intoned the donkey's bray
And, in an hour of play,
Taught peacocks how to strut?
Holy is Allah, but
Is holiness expressed
In hedgehogs? Whence the jest?
Even in creation's dawn
Was Puck with Oberon?

HOW BIRDS WERE MADE

Above his forests bowed the Spirit, dreaming
Of maize and wigwams and a tawny folk
Who should rejoice with him when autumn broke
Upon the woods in many-colored flame.
Pale birches, maples gleaming
In splendor of all gold and crimson tints,
And dark-green balsams with their purple hints
Of cones erect upon the stem, awoke
In his deep heart,
Though thought had yet no words,
Beauty no name,
Creative longing for a voice, a song
Blither than winds or brooklet's tinkling flow,
His own joy's counterpart.
He breathed upon the throng
Of wondering trees, and lo!
Their leaves were birds.

The birds do not forget, but love to follow
The trees whose shining colonies they were;
Else wherefore should the scarlet tanager
Fling from the oak his proud, exultant flush
Of music? Why 'mid yellow
Sprays of the willow by her empty nest
Lingers the golden warbler? Softly drest

In autumn buffs and russets, chorister
Sweetest of all,
Angel of lonely eves,
The hermit thrush
Haunts the November woodland. In them bides
Memory of that far time, ere eyes of men
Had seen the tender fall
Of shadow or the tides
Of silver sunrise, when
The birds were leaves.

THE BIRDS RETURN

Rejoice, O lonely trees! The birds return,
The birds that flew when your frail autumn leaves,
Translucent in the sun, fluttered like wings
Wistful for wanderings.

Even now the flight its ancient pattern weaves
Above the ocean, whose flung foam receives
Full many a spent, storm-driven voyager;
Above white pinnacles by man untrod;
Above the tawny desert that still heaves
With souls of buried cities, sands that stir
And shift and whisper. Homing to green sod
And your glad branches, welcome as God's words
The birds return,
The birds!

The upper air is all one rush of wings;
Millions of pinions cleave the crystal sky;
From Patagonia to polar snow
The golden plovers go,
A flight of shining arrows; wild geese cry;
Far overhead faint trumpets testify
To the splendid passing of the Arctic swan.
Rejoice, O trees! Below that lordlier host
Your bluebirds, robins, orioles, finches fly;
Their own fleet wind silvers the feathers on

Your little ruby-throats flashing from coast
Of Mexico. What happy piper herds
These hurrying wings
Of birds?

Already they are here! The tired wings
Fold in remembered maples. From the reeds
Red-shouldered blackbirds call; the meadow lark
Flutes from the grasses. Hark!
In every thicket, every clump of weeds,
Ripples of music! Rain of golden beads
From every treetop! Whistles, warbles, trills,
Criss-cross of carols bubbling from bright throats,
Throats that have swallowed wild, enchanted seeds
Of ecstasy, snatched up by dipping bills
From undiscovered isles! What rapture floats
From every bush whose blowing green engirds
Soft twitterings
Of birds!

Rejoice, O singing trees! The birds are here,
Swallow and warbler, tanager and wren,
Hovering, alighting, swaying, fluttering, all
Holding high carnival,
Darting in plummy chase beyond the ken
Of baffled eyes that soon shall glimpse again
A flirt of white-tipped tail, a purple crest,
Flicker of orange flame, a javelin

Of rose or azure flight. How busy then
With elfin architecture of the nest!
Nature has turned the fairest leaf within
Her missal of illuminated words.
The birds are here,
The birds!

YELLOW WARBLERS

The first faint dawn was flushing up the skies
When, dreamland still bewildering mine eyes,
I looked out to the oak that, winter-long,
— A winter wild with war and woe and wrong —
Beyond my casement had been void of song.

And lo! with golden buds the twigs were set,
Live buds that warbled like a rivulet
Beneath a veil of willows. Then I knew
Those tiny voices, clear as drops of dew,
Those flying daffodils that fleck the blue,

Those sparkling visitants from myrtle isles,
Wee pilgrims of the sun, that measure miles
Innumerable over land and sea
With wings of shining inches. Flakes of glee,
They filled that dark old oak with jubilee,

Foretelling in delicious roundelays
Their dainty courtships on the dipping sprays,
How they should fashion nests, mate helping mate,
Of milkweed flax and fern-down delicate
To keep sky-tinted eggs inviolate.

Listening to those blithe notes, I slipped once more
From lyric dawn through dreamland's open door,
And there was God, Eternal Life that sings
Eternal joy, brooding all mortal things,
A nest of stars, beneath untroubled wings.

WHAT SONG IS THIS?

What song is this that flushes pearl-pale air
 As if a rose
Shed all her sweetness in solution there,
 And all her glows
Of color? Nature's loveliest flower re-found
In richest ecstasies of rarest sound!
Rose of the air! rose of the dawn! bright rose
That in the veils of May's uncertain mist
With some glad bridal keeps the vocal tryst!
Gladness too great for human heart to bear!

Look! Those young oaks whose broideries of gold
 Too swiftly leaf
To pink and green — for she is shy to hold,
 Our spring, most brief,
Most winsome, here and gone, — listen! In those
Young oaks, what sparkles like a flying rose?
Forgotten all the winter's loss and grief.
Through silver haze that flush of beauty burns;
Rose-revenant of rapture, he returns,
The grosbeak, O rose-breasted and rose-souled!

WE'RE OFF*

We hear the rush of rivers,
Potomac, Orinoco,
And every feather quivers
For groves of palm and cocoa.
Our nests the rude winds ravel;
'Tis time for birds to travel.
We're flying down to Chili
And Mexico.

We're flying down to Chili;
We're flying willy-nilly,
We're flying where our beating wings must go;
For we hear far rivers flowing,
We feel a great sun glowing;
We're flying down to Chili
And Mexico.

We hear the rush of rivers,
Potomac, Orinoco,
And every feather quivers
For groves of palm and cocoa.
Our nests the rude winds ravel;
'Tis time for birds to travel
To Popocatpetl
And Yucatan.

*This may be sung to the tune of 'I'm going back to Dixie.'

To Popocatapetl,
That bubbling, boiling kettle,
Our wings are flying fast as small wings can;
For we hear far rivers flowing,
We feel a great sun glowing
On Popocatapetl
And Yucatan.

We hear the rush of rivers,
Potomac, Orinoco,
And every feather quivers,
For groves of palm and cocoa.
Our nests the rude winds ravel;
'Tis time for birds to travel.
We're off for the Antilles
And sweet Brazil.

We're off for the Antilles
That float like water-lilies
Upon soft blues that wear a surfy frill,
For we hear far rivers flowing,
We feel a great sun glowing
On the beautiful Antilles
And sweet Brazil.

CANARY IN THE CONSERVATORY

The bells are ringing for church,
 Brother Canary,
You twinkler from perch to perch,
 Curious, wary,
Flickering ball of fluff,
Topaz and sober buff,
As the sun and shadow take turns
Kissing your cage in the ferns,
 Captive Canary.

When the wild birds dip to the pane,
 Would you not follow,
— Spent with their southward strain,
 Oriole, swallow?
A flutter their swift flight brings,
Tremor to timid wings,
To the fragile daffodil plumes
Longing for tropic blooms,
 Longing to follow.

Nay, yours is a sky of glass,
 Startled Canary.
Those are but dreams that pass,
 Airy vagary.

Stretch your glistening neck
To the celery leaf and peck.
Yellow your roof of bars;
What more do you know of the stars,
 Brother Canary?

What more? O the music he flings,
 Sudden as fire!
The pulse of his prisoned wings,
 Their thwarted desire
Throbs in each mounting note,
And the bliss of him, Angel-Throat,
From the dancing orchids soars
Till his tiny heart adores
 In the golden choir.

Let us be church-mates today,
 Brother Canary,
— Playmates, as bird-folk say.
 Do the words vary?
Little Laughter of God,
Twinkling from rod to rod,
Star embodied in fluff,
Song is sermon enough,
 Holy Canary.

NATURE

PRAISE OF NATURE

O Mother Nature, look upon thine own!
From men and cities and the thronging ways
We come to fall before thy gracious throne
In this deep solitude, where thou wilt raise
Our burdened hearts, bewildered with the bliss
And changing anguish of tumultuous days,
To thy pure heights of peace. Ah, Mother, kiss
The fever from our lips that lost their song
When they forgot thy touch, as sea-birds miss
The passion of their wings when human wrong
Has borne them inland from their native spray.
Calm Goddess, speak thy word that maketh strong,
While o'er our wearied brows light shadows play,
Dropt from the leaves that fleck the azure day.

Oh, the delight of Nature! You who feel
Yourselves but slaves beneath the blind control
Of circumstance and bear his insolent heel
On your submissive necks, who yield the soul
To the despondent hour that wasteth it,
Forgetting how on rude and paltry scroll
Fair signs and sacred words may yet be writ,
Come to our joyous Mother! Where she leads
Her fleecy streamlets down the hillsides, sit
And let the dawning wind that wakes the reeds

Refresh your heavy lids, while you behold
How sunshine revels in the lowliest weeds,
And only human growths refuse to fold
In narrow cups their heritage of gold.

And you who bow before the Commonplace,
A generous peasant but a clownish king,
Return to Nature, till the oldtime grace
Flow once again from that sequestered spring,
Deep in the dim recesses of the heart,
Where each man hides a poet. Would you bring
Food to his famished lips, forsake the mart
And through the forest guide your haunted feet.
No curious nymph may thrust the boughs apart
With dewy arm; the Dryads grow discreet,
And scarcely is there found a modern breeze
So swift that it may catch the echoes sweet
Of laughter delicate within the trees.
Yet spirits fill the wood for him who sees.

Ay, for the souls in pain our Mother waits
With healing symbols. See her ocean beat
On barren sands and foam in rocky straits
With unavailing flow and vain retreat.
A restless breast that hoary pilgrim hath;
Dead faces touch it coldly, and his feet
Rage round the iron shores with fruitless wrath
To escape his bondage. But yon moon, as chill

As some relentless conscience, points the path
And, moaning, he obeys. Look higher still.
Within those circling spheres are fiery wars,
And yet their beauteous orbits they fulfill.
Even heaven's wild hearts, the flaming meteors,
No rebels are, but far ambassadors.

NOT YET

Not yet hath Nature, lovely colorist,
Bestirred her from creative dream to fling
Soft flame upon the woods, — nay, not to dip
One pleading maple-tip
In carmine; all the waiting world is whist,
Alert to hear the first faint flutes of spring.

Not yet the tingling flood of blue and gold
Is poured through heaven, but o'er the misty pond,
Quiet as patterned silk, flushed saplings lean;
And the auspicious green
Through the deep woods and on the unpathed wold
Brightens in patient moss and wistful frond.

Not yet cascades of melody invoke
The holy dawn, but all the air perceives,
By some fine thrill, the rushing northward flight
Of myriad wings, despite
The nonchalances of this crookback oak,
Still clinging to its russet shreds of leaves.

Not yet the laughing hid-folk of the earth
Thrust up white helm and golden coronet,
Sweet elfin host armored in gossamer,
But gentle tremors stir

The conscious mold; new beauty comes to birth
Under the snow's fast-melting coverlet.

Not yet, not yet the yearly miracle
Is wrought, but ecstasy is on the wing,
And her divine, irrevocable flight
Is swift as all delight.
The heart is hushed as for the sacring-bell,
Awe-smitten by expectancy of spring.

GYPSY-HEART

The April world is misted with emerald and gold;
The meadow-larks are calling sweet and keen;
Gypsy-Heart is up and off for woodland and for wold,
Roaming, roaming, roaming through the green.

Gypsy-Heart, away!

O the wind — the wind and the sun!

Take the blithe adventure of the fugitive today;
Youth will soon be done.

From buds that May is kissing there trembles forth a soul;
The rosy sprays are whispering to the white;
Gypsy-Heart is heedless now of thrush and oriole,
Dreaming, dreaming, dreaming of delight.

Gypsy-Heart, beware!

O the song — the song in the blood!

Magic walks the forest; there's bewitchment on the air.
Spring is at the flood.

The wings of June are woven of fragrance and of fire;
Heap roses, crimson roses, for her throne.
Gypsy-Heart is anguished with tumultuous desire,
Seeking, seeking, seeking for its own.

Gypsy-Heart, abide!

O the far — the far is the near!

'Tis a foolish fable that the universe is wide.
All the world is here.

THE PERFECT DAY

God made a day of blue and gold,
Sweet as a violet,
As merry as a marigold;
It may be shining yet
In some blest vale, some dreamy dell
Among the heavenly hills,
Where here and there the asphodel
Is flecked by daffodils
And gentians, flowers that twinkled on
The fields our childhood knew,
Too lovely for oblivion,
Fed with immortal dew.

That summer day, all murmurous
With laughers of old mirth,
How tenderly 'twould comfort us,
Still homesick for the earth;
With what dear touch 'twould fold us in,
As to a mother's knee,
From those strange spaces crystalline
Of vast eternity,
— A day God saw with smiling eyes,
The summer's coronet!
In His far cycles of surprise
It may be shining yet.

EAVESDROPPING

Though the winds but stir on their hoary thrones
Of hemlock and pungent pine,
All the whispering woodland tones
Gossip of things divine, —

Why God is gray in the granite rock,
And green in the lichen flake,
And swift in the darting swallow-flock,
And slow in the lapping lake;

Why God is sweet in the hermit-thrush,
And hoarse in the frog; and why
His touch on the bee is golden plush,
And gauze on the stinging fly;

Why God is life in the mushroom there,
And death in the toadstool here;
Mirth in the dancing maidenhair;
In its hidden adder, fear.

Oh, if this berry that stains my lip
Could teach me the woodland chat,
Science would bow to my scholarship,
And Theology doff the hat.

LET LIFE BE ROYAL

Let life be royal in these days majestic
With gold and crimson pomp, as if the flame
Of all the sunsets of the year had fallen
In glowing flakes on hill and field and forest.
Not on ignoble errands may our feet
Go forth by pathways paved with Persian splendor,
But sandaled fair, ambassadors of Glory,
Come as the morning stars rejoicing came
To earth's first festival. Oh, let the spirit
Put on her shining robes of high behavior,
Courage and courtliness and all the sweet
Surprises of delight, for never palace
Were proud as this, lifting bright Beauty's name
On a million banners for all winds to greet.

AUTUMN WEATHER

Had I a flute made out of the heart
Of a seven-year cherry tree,
How blithely would I bear my part
In the day's wild minstrelsy;
A world all glitter, whistle and twitter,
Whir of a rising quail,
Rustling edges of saffron sedges,
Flirt of a squirrel tail,
Robin conventions in meadows of gentians,
Debating the hour to fly,
While the birch, a goddess in silver bodice,
Waves them a gay goodbye!

I love the laughter that follows after
Knowledge of life's keen cost,
As I love the swirling of leaves unfurling
New colors to flout the frost,
Leaves worn meagre but swift and eager
As the merry winds pipe them on
To their last cotillion in frocks vermilion,
Amber and cinnamon;
As I love the valor of flowers whose pallor
Carries a fragrance yet,
On whose crisping petals the moth still settles
For a passing pirouette.

O trumpet-blowing of gales, O glowing
Of maples and oaks that shine
Flame on the altar, gold on the psalter,
Till the earth is so divine
That the acorns falling are rosaries calling
The faith of the woods to burn,
And 'mid poplar candles God walks in sandals
Embroidered with bronze of fern!
How blithely would I bear my part
In anthem and litany,
Had I a flute made out of the heart
Of a seven-year cherry tree!

A SHAKESPEARE MASQUERADE

The storm had passed; the air was still;
So by the leave of Gentle Will
I shut the sovereign book of plays
To woo the queen of winter days;
But royalties are all akin,
As world without to world within.

A carnival of sleeted snows!
The elms were keen Mercutios
Dazzling with such a diamond wit
No Capulet could suffer it.
In muffled bush I marked her fret,
The crook-back nurse of Juliet.

Two opalescent briars pricked
Like Beatrice and Benedict.
Beyond their tinkling repartee
Stood marble-wrought Hermione
With ghost and mantled Prospero
And many a 'mockery king of snow.'

Across the sparkling crust had gone
The fairy feet of Oberon,
And high upon a crystal wall
A tuft of grasses showed to all

How poor old Lear's white hair had tossed
A last defiance to the frost.

Enskied and sainted Isabel
Had stolen from her nunnery cell,
And where the burdened hemlock threw
Dark shadow on the drift, I knew
A sable-suited Hamlet bowed
Above Ophelia in her shroud.

THE CHANGING ROAD

Beneath the softly falling snow
The wood whose shy anemones
We plucked such little while ago
Becomes a wood of Christmas trees.

Our paths of rustling silken grass
Will soon be ermine bands of white
Spotted with tiny steps that pass
On silent errands in the night.

The river will be locked in hush
But frosted like a fairy lawn
With knots of crystal flowers that flush
By moonlight, blanching in the dawn.

Flown are our minstrels, golden-wing
And rosy-breast and ruby-throat,
But all the pines are murmuring
A sweet, orchestral under-note.

So trustfully our hands we lay
Within the old, kind hands of Time,
Who holds on his mysterious way
From rime to bloom, from bloom to rime,

And lets us run beside his knee
O'er rough and smooth, and touch his load,
And play we bear the burden, we,
And revel in the changing road,

Till ivory dawn and purple noon
And dove-grey eve have one by one
Traced on the skies their ancient rune,
And all our little strength is done.

Then Time shall lift a starry torch
In signal to his gentle Twin,
Who, stooping from a shining porch,
Gathers the drowsy children in.

I wonder if, through that strange sleep
Unstirred by clock or silver chime,
Our dreams will not the cadence keep
Of those unresting feet of Time,

And follow on his beauteous path ,
From snow to flowers, from flowers to snow,
And marvel what high charge he hath,
Whither the fearless footsteps go.

SEA AND SHORE

SEA-BIRDS

Like beryl which some mighty alchemist
Has molten with turquoise and amethyst
And shot with diamond, leagues on leagues away
The ocean plunges in tremendous play.

'Twas so Columbus saw it, Cabot so,
Those far-eyed sailors of the Long Ago.
The dauntless Vikings drove their dragon-prow
Down such a shimmering road as rocks us now.

But what were they, and what, ah, what are we?
No more to life than sea-birds to the sea,
That recks not of the million million gone
While still new millions toss the sparkle on.

And shall the sea-bird quarrel with the sea?
To dip the wing in joy and then to be
Where broken foam, lost sunrise, fallen star
Hold court together, is it cause for war?

LIR OF THE WATERS

Gracious at rest, tormented by the sting
Of gales to madness, tossed with tragic glee,
Spent as a sobbing child, the fitful sea
Smote on the early Celt's imagining
In vision of a rapturous old king,
His purple rent, his white hair streaming free,
His arms upflung to heaven in frantic plea.
Century to century sang the name shall ring
Till centuries cease, for one deep master-tone
Has brought that glorious agony so near
Our hearts we feel in ocean's rush and roar
The furious majesty of old King Lear,
Whose rages melt to a last tender moan,
Even as the billow dies upon the shore.

THE TITANIC

As she sped from dawn to gloaming, a palace upon the sea,
Did the waves from her proud bows foaming whisper what
port should be?

That her maiden voyage was tending to a haven hushed and
deep,

Where after the shock and the rending she should moor at
the wharf of sleep?

Oh, her name shall be tale and token to all the ships that sail,
How her mighty heart was broken by blow of a crystal flail,
How in majesty still peerless her helpless head she bowed
And in light and music, fearless, plunged to her purple
shroud.

Did gleams and dreams half-heeded, while the days so lightly
ran,

Awaken the glory seeded from God in the soul of man?
For touched with a shining chrism, with love's fine grace
imbued,

Men turned them to heroism as it were but habitude.

O midnight strange and solemn, when the icebergs stood at
gaze,

Death on one pallid column, to watch our human ways,
And saw throned Death defeated by a greater lord than he,
Immortal Life who greeted home-comers from the sea.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

HOME

FOR THE OLD HOME FESTIVAL AT FALMOUTH

There is many a whither away and many a clarion call,
Many a deed for the doing and many a land to roam;
There are wonder-ways that wander where ancient shadows
fall;

There is only one path home.

And green is the path that leadeth to where in life's first days
Our hearts like the buds of April to sun and to wind
uncurled,
Taught by this fair sea-village, wrapt in its pearly haze,
The beauty of the world.

It is here that our pulses caught the beat of the dancing
earth,
The multitudinous laughter of the violet waves at play,
That our childhood took from the heart of God the gift of
mirth
Simply as thrushes may.

It is here that we first saw sorrow, here on these rose-clad
sands;
When for her homing sailors the town made jubilee,
Oh, the widow, the storm-robbed mother, that stretched
imploring hands
To the unappealable sea!

With the breath of the pine and the cedar there came to our
spirits here

The breath of heroic life from the captains whose voyages
were done,

Like the bronzed sweetfern of October proud in their fading
year,

Honors of manhood won.

Here, too, where all were neighbors and hand lay warm in
hand,

Where, like our pink Mayflower with brown leaves heaped
above,

Plain ways hid finest feeling, a child might understand
The loveliness of love.

And like to the salty flaw that would pierce the forest
scent,

Beyond the sweet of the woods the illimitable brine,
Ever there thrilled to us through all human cherishment
Hints of the far divine.

Thence it came that, as down the curve of our wind-obeying
cape,

The low, white, drifted dunes are wavy like the sea,
Early our thoughts were molded to the unconscious shape
Of immortality.

There is many a shrine for pilgrims — the fountain that
quenched our thirst,

The hard-scaled summit of vision, the field of our perilous
strife,

But holy the awe that broodeth o'er the spot where we tasted
first

The sacrament of life.

THE SONG OF NIAGARA

An alien song. Though day by day I listen,
No syllable of that majestic chant
May my adoring passion comprehend.
With many a lucent, evanescent hue
The plunging torrents glisten.
Far-seen, colossal plumes of spray ascend,
Their dazzling white shot through and through
With quivering rainbows, until every plant,
Each hoar, blue-berried cedar loved of bird,
Each fine fern-tracery the cold mists christen
To spirit grace. The frosted branches bend
With sparkle of such jewels as transcend
All fantasy of elfin-craft. Yet who
Interpreteth the great enchantment's word?

Ye are the primal Sibyls, Sisters twain;
Far elder than the whispering Cumæan,
Or Delphi's burning prophetess, ye hold
Your splendid thrones unvisited of Time,
— One robed in rushing waters whose rich gold,
Imperial fold on fold,
Was wrought from sunsets of an earlier æon,
Of an intenser clime,
Yet tinged by April willows and the rain
Of forest leaves autumnal, powdery drift

The eddies bring as tribute gift
Of Huron and Superior; and One
More graciously sublime,
Mantled in raiment spun
From foliage of some strange, supernal spring,
Such pure, ethereal green
That Heaven stoops down, her holy azure fain
To blend with it and revel in the sun;
And oftentimes each iris-scarfèd Queen,
As angel-wing reflecteth angel-wing,
Puts on her sister's sheen.

Mysterious! if eyes can hardly bear
The glory of your opalescent robes,
Your diamond aureoles and veils empearled,
May the stunned ear divine
Your awful oracle? August, yet wild,
Do your tremendous pæans still prolong
Creation's old, unhumanized delight,
The laughter of the Titans? Were ye there
With your deep diapason answering
The archangelic, chanting, golden globes,
What time they chorused forth their crystalline,
Exultant welcome to the stranger world?
Or is it, toiling Cataracts, the doom,
The unrevealable, forbidden thing,
Your antiphonic solemn voices boom?
Or peradventure do your peals proclaim

Some all-triumphal Name
That, could it once be won by mortal ear,
Would ecstasy the griefs we suffer here
And charter Love to wing
Her radiant flight beyond oblivion?
Dread Sisters, ye who smite
The senses with intolerable roar,
Is there no meaning in your ceaseless song,
No word of God in all your mighty throng
Of multitudinous thunders evermore?

LYDD

FOR THE REUNION OF THE BATES FAMILY AT QUINCY

AUGUST 3, 1916

Far away on the sunny levels
Where Kent lies drowsing beside the sea,
Where over the foxglove as over the foam
The gray gull sails, is our ancient home.
Wide though we wander, something follows,
The cradle-call from a village hid
Under the cloud of rooks and swallows
That love its thatches and orchards, Lydd.

Here they sported in rustic revels,
Our sturdy forbears, while ale flowed free,
Richard and Susan and Sybil and John,
All their jollity hushed and gone;
Our grandsires proud of their scraps of Latin,
Our grandams, 'notable huswifs' all;
We may touch the very settles they sat in,
But they, like their shadows upon the wall,

Have slipped from their sweet, accustomed places,
Stephen, Samuel, Ellen, Anne.
The pewter flagons they valued so
Stand, though battered, in shining row,
But the hands that scoured them, long since folded,

Lips that smacked over them, long since dust,
Are known no more in the town they molded
To civic honor and neighbor trust.

Ah, for their quaint, forgotten graces,
Flushing raptures of maid and man,
James and Alice, Thomas and Joan,
Blood of our blood and bone of our bone!
Only the trampled slabs and brasses
That floor the aisles of the old church tell
Their dates and virtues to him who passes,
How long they labored in Lydd, how well.

Their Catholic sins have all been shriven,
And their Puritan righteousness pardoned, too
Lax and merry, or holy and harsh,
They have flown to Heaven from Romney Marsh,
Lydia, David, Joshua, Zealous,
'Katharine Spinster,' yet still on earth
Their wraiths abide in our being, jealous
For the brief, blunt name and its modest worth.

For each of us is phantom-driven,
A haunted house where a glimmering crew
Of dear and queer ancestral ghosts
Quarrel and match their family boasts,
Color our hair and fashion our noses,
Shape the deed and govern the mood;

In every rose are a thousand roses;
Every man is a multitude.

A patchwork we are of antique vagaries;
Primitive passions trouble our pulse.
'Margery, relict of Andrew Bate,'
Clement, Rachel and William hate
And adore in us. No vain sunriser
In all our clan, but he owes the praise
To some progenital dew-surpriser
Who knelt to the dawn in pagan days.

Sailors that steered for the misty Canaries,
Fishers whose feet loved the feel of the dulse,
Agnes, Simon, Julian, George,
Faithful in kitchen, hayfield and forge,
Give us our dreams, our sea-love, the voices
That speak in our conscience, rebuke and forbid.
Hark! In our festal laughter rejoices
A quavering note from the graves of Lydd.

AT WELLS

Dumb

They chime, they chime, the sweet cathedral bells,
Cleaving my cloudy thought, if murkiest cloud
Ere hung so heavy as, on spirit bowed,
This drear confusion weighs. Where is it dwells
My truth of soul? What veil of shifting spells,
Duties unduteous, glammers disallowed,
Myself doth from myself forever shroud?
Once more that silver-throated peal outwells.
Amid the chanting throng I kneel alone,
Mute, dull of heart, yet fain to screen the brow.
Interpret me to Heaven, deep organ tone!
Oh, soaring arch, bear witness for me now!
My dumb God-passion speak, great minster, thou
For centuries a human prayer in stone!

Matins

Clamor of rooks from pinnacle and spire
Hails an encrimsoned east; but chill and gray
Below the pillared vistas arch away
Through shadowy nave to glory-smitten choir,
Where Orient sunbeams thrill with jeweled fire
The dreaming glass that blossoms unto day
In roseate plumes and golden halo-ray
And seraph faces rapt with God-desire.

Ah, yet these walls, though hoary with the woe
And shrift of centuries, are all too strait
For such a splendor. From the elm-roofed lawn
Where throstles chant and streams responsive flow
I'll worship Him on Whom my longings wait
Before the great east window of the dawn.

SONG

THE TREE OF SONG

An idle tree, whose timber builds no ships,
Whose wilding growth is all unfit to trace
Trim parallels in park and market-place,
Yet precious for the fragrant dew that drips
From blowing sprays to comfort fevered lips,
For lilt of hidden birds, for changeful grace
Of leafy shade that sunbeams interlace,
For heaven's dear blue about the spiring tips.
The world's great highway takes no heed of it,
Though paths wind thither through the April green.
The earth's blind forces feel no need of it;
Yet was there shaped, before the shaping hours,
A subtle league and sympathy between
This rhythmic tree and all effectual powers.

THE POET

Of fairyland his foot is free
And with a seraph sword
He keeps for sons of mystery
That garden of the Lord;

Dim realm where all this earth's misrule
Is glamoured into grace,
Where pilgrims of the Beautiful
Behold her hallowed face;

That garden walled with ancient awe
Where the dreamer walks apart;
That fire to which the world is straw,
Land of the Living Heart.

TRANSLATORS

What are we but translators,
We of the Fellowship,
What but a guild of translators
Playing our modest part?
The poem is this wild earth
Singing in every sod;
For lore of madness and mirth
Into the fathomless heart
Of life our pens we dip;
Mere scribes, dull commentators
On the syllables of God.

Where is the word can render
The grace of a wind-blown seed,
Or a firefly's fugitive splendor,
Or the clarion notes that cleave
The path of the oriole?
O Beauty, to Thee would we raise
A consecrate passion of soul
Alert as the thirsty leaves
That listen for rain; but a weed
By the wayside, silken, slender,
Defies our stammering praise.

And what of the good and the evil
At war in the spirit of man,

Titanic in their upheaval?
The sages of centuries pore
On the human riddle in vain;
Dim runes historians con;
Languages rise and wane;
Drama and tale are more,
Since their first rude chant began
At altars far, primeval,
Than the waves of the Amazon.

Chaucer adoring the daisy,
Shakespeare and Shelley sped
With the soaring lark through the hazy
English skies to the gate
Of heaven where angels pressed
To hear that rapture mount,
— How was their music blest,
How were their hearts elate
As on mystic dewdrops fed!
And Blake, divinely crazy,
Too close to the lyric fount!

Æschylus, whose gigantic
Agonies tore the veil,
Albeit in gesture frantic,
That hides the brooding Fates;
Dante, whose stern heart shook
With torture of all the hells

Before his eyes might look
On the Snow-white Rose, — of hates
And horrors they made a tale
Dearer than lays romantic,
Truer than chronicles.

Yet even our craft's Grand Masters
But echo as genius may
The triumphs and disasters
All living undergo.
The song of songs is written
On the sun, in golden pride
Ruling the sky till smitten
By the black arrow. Flow
And ebb! Still wends the way
From violets to asters,
From dawn to eventide.

Few pens are diamond-pointed,
Yet at life's festival
All quills and reeds conjoined
May not suffice to trace
The loveliness and awe
Of that marvellous pantomime,
Or search its hidden law.
The least of us has place
To look and note, nor shall
Our Art be disanointed
Till God unchariot Time.

APRIL TWENTY-THIRD

A memory, like a zephyr, wandered through
The colonnades of Heaven and, at request,
Will Shakespeare reared a cloudy stage and set
His plays — sore shamed they were — once more to do
Their ancient office. All the angels praised,
But in the shelter of their wings confessed
One to another that the tricky sport,
Frenzies and furies and the shock of fray,
Perplexed their white, serene intelligence.
The highest ranks of the redeemed stood dazed,
But half remembering their mortality,
Rapture of love, pain's fierce reality,
In those far æons ere earth flamed away.
Only the hardly-saved, the devil-torn,
The ruddy fringe of that ethereal court,
Saints by the hairsbreadth, felt their lashes wet,
Sobbed out and shook when stormy Lear went crazed,
Threw asphodels to Rosalind, grew tense
With Hamlet's terror and, at end, their bliss
Sweeter within them for the taste of this,
Surprised their harpstrings with a gold acclaim,
A pæan for that misty English morn
While yet Time dwelt with Space, when softly came
The miracle, — when, an unheeded name,
Shakespeare was born.

IN THE POETS' CORNER

R. B.; E. B. B.

Do they hold converse keen as wine
Under the pavement, they
Who make, in sooth, the royal line
Of England, kings by right divine,
Crowned with the bay?
Yet one is lonely in that great
Rejoicing fellowship,
— Lonely with Chaucer for a mate,
And Spenser, Dreamland's laureate.
He hears the drip
Of Florence dew upon a mound
That golden tides of spring
Mantle with bloom, the angel-sound
Of nightingales that all around
Her silence sing.

THREE TALES

OUR LADY'S TUMBLER

On a leaf that waits but a breath to crumble
Is written this legend of fair Clairvaux,
How once at the abbey gates stood humble
A carle more supple than beechen bow,
And they cloistered him, though to dance and tumble
Was all the lore he had wit to know.

He had never a vesper hymn nor matin,
Pater noster nor *credo* learned;
Ill had the wood-birds taught him Latin,
But to every wayside cross he turned,
And Our Lady of Val wore cloth of satin
Because of the gold his gambols earned.

So they cloistered him at his heart's desire,
Though never a stave could he tone aright.
With shame and grief was his soul a-fire
To stand in the solemn candle-light
Abashed and mute before priest and choir
And the little lark-voiced acolyte.

Of penance and vigil he was not chary,
With bitter rods was his body whipt;
Yet his heart, like a stag's, was wild and wary,
Till at last, one morn, from the Mass he slipt

And hied him down to a shrine of Mary
Deep in the dusk of the pillared crypt.

'Ah, beauteous Lady,' he cried, imploring
The image whose face in the gloom was wan,
'Let me work what I may for thine adoring,
Though less than the least of thy clergeons can,
But here thou art lonely, while chants are soaring
In the church above; and a dancing-man

Might do thee disport.' Then he girt him neatly
And vaulted before her the vault of Champagne.
On his head and hands he tumbled featly,
Did the Arragon twirl and the leap of Lorraine,
Till the Queen of Heaven's dim lips smiled sweetly
As she watched his joyance of toil and pain.

Ay, even so long as the High Mass lasted
He plied his art in that darksome place,
And never again he scourged nor fasted
His eager body whose lissome grace
Cheered Our Lady till years had wasted
The dancer's force, and he drooped apace.

And once, when the buds were bright on the larches
And the young wind whispered of violets,
He came like a wounded knight who marches
To the tomb of Christ. With striving and sweats

He made there under those sombre arches
The Roman spring and the vault of Metz.

Then he could no more and, with hand uplifted,
Saluted Our Lady and fell to earth,
Where the monks discovered his corse all drifted
Over with blooms of celestial birth;
For when human worship at last is sifted,
Our best is labor and love and mirth.

THE SEA-PATH

In the hall of Swarin the Sea King the thanes were heavy
of mood,
Though red on the carven benches shone the light from the
pine-tree wood
Ablaze on the hearth, and golden it flashed on the many-
folden,
The fair-dyed, woven hangings where the bed of Swarin
stood.

Night-long had the leeches pondered the lore of the woodland
green,
Runes scored on the bark of birch trees whose quivering
branches lean
To the east, and wan for sorrow they waited the weird of the
morrow,
For sore their hearts misdoubted what the brooding Norns
might mean.

For the strength was shorn from Swarin. As a storm-
uprooted oak
Lay the Lord of the Ice-Hills, mighty in the play of sworded
folk,
But the white hair, oft uplifted by the whistling sea-wind,
drifted
Like foam on the blue-stained bed-gear, and the women's
sobs outbroke.

Sudden the gray lips parted with a glad, far-echoing cry:
'Long is the road to God-home, but behold! my feet draw
nigh.

Wide on the wold is the faring, but the hours of night are
wearing,

And my day of days is dawning in yonder pallid sky.

'Make room, O heroes of Odin! room at the mead-crowned
board!

Yet shamed am I that I fall not by bite of the singing sword
Amidst the eager rattle of spears, the thorns of battle.

Shall Swarin die as a coward? My hearth-friends, lift your
lord.'

Then the wail waxed great and grievous, and the gleemen
rent atwain

Their shining harpstrings witless to mend the people's pain,
For love's eyes, nothing blinded, wist well that the king was
minded

To go home that day to Odin and his heart of death was fain.

But the Dauntless of Spirit raised him and called for his war-
array,

And in crested helm they dight him and steel shirt gleaming
gray.

On his gold-rimmed shield they bore him, his banner of fame
before him,

And the horns blew up as for battle while they took the seaward way.

Then the pale world glowed with sundawn, and over the blue sea-floor

Fell a ruddy shaft like a pathway to Odin's open door..

With gold was the king's helm smitten, and the dragon-keel was litten

And the blazoned sails, and the sea-runes cut deep in the flashing oar.

On the deck they laid King Swarin, with treasure for Odin's need,

Fur cloaks and hammered war-gear and many a silken weed,

With gold of the world's desire, and they hid the seed of fire

In the heart of the foam-necked sea-bird, while the war-host wept for the deed.

But in seemly guise his kinsfolk heaped store of priceless things,

Glittering stones from the earth-caves and battle-spoil of rings,

On the mailgirt breast of the Fearless, and smiled to his smiling, tearless,

And wished him weal in his faring, for their hearts were the hearts of kings.

Last knelt his daughter beside him and kissed him soft and
sweet,
And lifted her child to nestle once more where the great
heart beat,
Till the sunny ringlets blended with the hoary beard; then
wended
Shoreward her way full queenly, guiding the youngling's feet.

And the dragon leapt from the tether, the golden beak sprang
free,
And blithely the ship ran over the blue hills of the sea,
Whilst a long cry followed after, but the white waves foamed
with laughter,
And the salt wind sang in the cordage the song of Ægir's glee.

And the keen gray eyes of Swarin, whilst the clouds sped by
above,
Waxed dreamy as maiden's musing on her blossoming days
of love;
For afar from his gaze had drifted all sights save the east sky
rifted
By the ruby gates of God-home, and his heart had peace
thereof.

But the fire-seed yearned for harvest, for the praise of those
who reap,
And the stealthy flames, a-whisper, crept up the bulwark
steep,

While far o'er the Sea Queen's acre rang the shout of the
Battle-Breaker,
And the crimsoned sword of Swarin in the bitter wound stood
deep.

Clear rose the hero's death-song: 'Thus my count of slain
I fill.

Welcome me home, All-Father! On earth have I wrought
thy will.

Now are the bright doors parted, and over the gulf, leal-
hearted,

I clasp for thy cloudy garment and follow thy footsteps still.'

The wild-fire wrapt the sea-bird from top-mast unto wave,
But loud laughed out King Swarin on the latest breath he
gave,

For flashed in the flame-rent spaces gold shields and glimmer-
ing faces

Of Odin's Victory-Wafters, the Choosers of the Brave.

THE DEATH OF OLAF TRYGGVISON

I

Blue as blossom of the myrtle
Smiled the steadfast eyes of Olaf
On the host of ships that harried
His enraged, gold-glittering Dragon,
Snared within that ring of sea-birds,
By their fierce beaks rent and bitten;
All men knew the crimson kirtle,
Rich-wrought helm and shield that dazzled
Back the whirling wrath of sword-edge;
But the king, while doom yet tarried,
Bleeding fast beneath his byrny,
Still throughout the savage hurtle
Of the ax-play and the spear-play,
Blinding storm of spears and arrows,
Shivering steel and shock of iron,
Stood erect above the slaughter,
An unblenching lord of battle,
Till about his knees were drifted
Heaps of slain, his last earl smitten.
From the poop then sprang King Olaf,
Faring on his farthest journey,
With his shield above him lifted,
Shield whose shimmer mocked the rattle
Of the missiles rained upon it,
Down into the deep sea-water.

*Nevermore shall he thrust keel
Into billow, fain to feel
Pull of rudder 'neath his hand,
Swing of tide that bears his folk
On to spoil some startled strand,
Rick and homestead wrapt in smoke.
All the daring deeds are done
Of King Olaf Tryggvison.*

II

As the red-stained waves ran o'er him,
Faithful to their friend, sea-rover,
Hid the flickering shield forever
From the fury of his foemen,
Hushed the war-din to his hearing,
Sweetened on his swooning senses
Even that wild roar of victory,
Through the dim green gloom appearing,
Women's faces flashed before him.
Fair the first, but wan with vigil,
Mother-tender, mother-valiant,
Face of Astrid, she who bore him
On a couch of ferns and clover
In a little, lonely island,
Warded only by her fosterer,
Old Thorolf, who would not sever
His rude service from her sorrows;
She who flitted with her man-child

On from fen to forest, hunted
By the murderers of his father,
Every rustling branch an omen
Of the dangers darkening over
That rich seed of frail defenses;
She whose last look smiled him courage,
Rosy wean of three rude winters,
When the pirate crew had seized them,
Sold the gold-haired boy and mother
Into sundering thralldom, slaughtered
Old Thorold as stiff and useless.
Then the face of Queen Allogia
Pitying his comely childhood,
Face like sudden shield, white-shining,
Raised between the vengeful blood-wrath
And the lad whose earliest death-blow
Smote the unforgotten slayer
Of Thorold. Soft gleamed another,
Younger face, pale rose of passion,
Geira, to whose grace her lover
Bowed his boyhood's turbulences,
Gentled in that blissful bridal,
Till death stole upon their joyance,
Gathering her fragrant girlhood
Like a flower. Frenzy-driven
Forth King Olaf fared a-warring,
South-away to sack and harry
Every quiet shore that silvered

On his homeless, waste horizon.
Still amid the flying splinters
Of the swords, 'mid famous morrows,
When the Norns did as it pleased them
With their secret shuttle, twining
In the pattern of his life-days
Strands of mirth and splendor only
For the rending, for the strewing
On the whirlwind, still the Viking
Was of women loved and hated.
Swift their faces glinted on a
Drowning sight, — the Irish Gyda,
Wise of heart to ken a hero
Where among her well-decked suitors
In wet-weather gear he towered,
Shag-cloaked Northman, rough and royal;
Then Queen Sigrid, hight the Haughty,
With the blow his glove had given
Whitening on her lips, a striking
That became his scathe, for fiercest
Of his foes was she thenceforward;
And the desperate young Gudrun,
Who, avenger of her father,
Would her bridegroom's breast have riven,
Glorious as he slept beside her,
With a stab too long belated,
With the steel he, waking, wrested
From that slender hand; and Thyri,

Clinging, coaxing, pouting, weeping,
Craving still the thing denied her,
With a sting in all her sweetness,
Yet to him a new Madonna
For the baby-boy who nestled
On her bosom, all bedrifted
With her yellow hair, their starry
Little son too dear for keeping,
Tender guest that might not tarry,
Though upon those tiny temples
Crystal cold beneath the kisses,
Like midsummer storm came showering
Down the last wild tears of Olaf,
Ever longing, ever lonely.

*Nevermore to him, who there
Chokes with brine, shall maidens bear
Honey-mead in well-carved cup,
While the harpers strike the strings,
And the songs and shouts go up
Till the hollow roof-tree rings.
All the wine of life is run
For King Olaf Tryggvison.*

III

All had vanished from the vision
Of those blue eyes, blankly staring
Through that pall of purple waters,

Through that peace below all motion
Of intoning tides and billows,
Where sad palaces are peopled
By the gods he had forsaken.
Too divine for vain derision
And the empty sound of censure,
Wondered they upon the waster
Of their temples, their blasphemer,
As that drifting body rested
On the knees of Ran, the husher
Of all hearts beneath the ocean.
Many mariners, far-faring
By the swan-road, subtly taken
In her nets, have proved her pillows
Soft with slumber. Azure-vested
Clustering came her thrice-three daughters,
While her lord, the hoary Ægir,
From his castle coral-steepled
Wended slow, the seaweed woven
In his mantle. Graceful Niord,
Crowned with shells, and mystic Mimir,
Ay, and many another followed,
Musing on this altar-crusher,
On this sleeping king, awaker
In a realm not theirs, this taster
Of strange bread and wine, this dreamer
Of the new dream that had cloven
Even their dusk region, hollowed

Out of chaos by All-Maker,
By the Power past Peradventure.

*Nevermore shall Olaf's rod
Smite a silent, oak-hewn god;
Nevermore shall Olaf's torch
Fire great Woden's house, or Thor's,
Where the stubborn heathen scorch,
Constant to their ancestors,
— Souls too steadfast to be won
By King Olaf Tryggvison.*

IV

From that pallid body parted,
Sped the proud, impetuous spirit
Forth to seek his throne of splendor;
Not the benches of Valhalla
In the ancient Grove of Glistening,
Palace wrought of spears, roofed over
With gold shields, the tiles of Woden,
Where brave warriors feast forever
On the boar's flesh, making merry
With the foaming mead, the minstrels
And the hero-sport of battle;
But that far more dazzling dwelling
Of the young god, radiant-hearted,
— Christ, whose loyal earl was Olaf.
Ho, what welcome would he merit,
He, the new faith's fierce defender,

Forcing thousands, as a drover
Urges wild, unwilling cattle,
To the font, their blond heads shrinking
From the sacred dew? Who would not
Be faith-changers, take the christening
At his gracious word, gainsayers
Of his will, had been the players
In grim shows, — maimed, torn asunder,
Stoned, slow-strangled with the swallowing
Of live snakes. So did he sever
Norway from her shrines, excelling
All Christ's folk in fealty. Should not
Horns blow up for him in Heaven,
Olaf Tryggvison, who even
Had the wizards well outwitted,
Bidding them to feast, and firing,
While they drowsed there, dull with drinking,
Hall and all; caught those who flitted,
Chained them fast on tide-swept skerry,
Sorcerers whose best spell-singing
Had not stayed the waves from following?
Are not saints and angels listening
For his rumored coming, choiring
Till their praises are as thunder
Of great minster-bells a-ringing?

*Olaf stood imparadised
In the loveliness of Christ,*

*Of the White Lord Christ, Who said:
'Only precious stones of pity,
Holy pearls of peace may build
For each soul the Shining City.
When in thee is Heaven fulfilled,
I shall claim my champion,
Not King Olaf Tryggvason,
But my shepherd Mercy, fed
On Love the wine and Love the bread.'*

QUATRAINS AND OTHER BRIEF LYRICS

POETRY

Oh, we who know thee know we know thee not,
Thou soul of Beauty, thou Essential Grace!
Yet undeterred by baffled speech and thought
The heart stakes all upon thy hidden face.

DREAM AND DEED

What of the deed without the dream? A song
Reft of its music and a scentless rose.
Except the heart outsoar the hand, the throng
Will bless thee little for thy labor-throes.

The dream without the deed? Dawn's fairy gold,
Paled, ere it wake the hills, to misty gray.
Except the hand obey the heart, behold,
Thy grievèd angel turns his face away.

SUCCESS

He who would rear a palace for his pride
Oft feasted in its halls, though none remain.
Who strove to lift to God a perfect fane
Sculptured one deathless pillar ere he died.

LOVE PLANTED A ROSE

Love planted a rose
And the world turned sweet.
Where the wheat-field blows
Love planted a rose.
Up the mill-wheel's prose
Ran a music-beat.
Love planted a rose,
And the world turned sweet.

OUR DRIFTWOOD FIRE

How we delighted in our driftwood fire,
When festal eves would merrily decree it,
Dances of rainbow witches high and higher!
We, when this old earth burns, would love to see it.

FIREWOOD

First was a fire of myrtle,
Just for my Love and me;
The storm at the door might hurtle,
But safe within sat we.

Now cypress boughs are burning
Upon my hearth, and all
Whose hearts are sore with yearning
May share my forest-hall.

MONUMENT IN AN ENGLISH CHURCH

In ruff and farthingale the mother keeps
Three-centuried watch lest psalm or anthem fret
The quiet of her cradled child who sleeps
Lapt soft in alabaster coverlet.

Time parodies thy dimples, baby-face.
He mars the stone but not the peace within.
Rest, little sleeper, in God's special grace;
Only the ages touch thee, not their sin.

ROME

Ruins on ruins! O eternal city,
Thou palimpsest of all the past, what soul
Can give thy martyr-host its meed of pity,
Or bear thy doom's reverberant thunder-roll?

THE APPIAN WAY

What is the past? Didst find it where we went
Far out on that enmarbled, sculptured Way?
We found the unappeasable lament,
Bewildered cry of spirit over clay.

NAPLES

On through the silver rain to one swift smile
Of sunset on an opalescent bay,
Vesuvius benignly blue the while,
Forgetful of his fatal yesterday.

THE JUNGFRAU

It is the hour when yon stern height
 Puts on her bridal grace,
The hour when day's departing light
 Steals to her lonely face,
And touches every rugged line
 With such ethereal gleam,
The crystal mountain stands divine,
 A maiden in her dream.

FIRST VIEW OF THE HOLY LAND

Faint in the pearly dawn, a silver line

It gleamed upon the sea; our hearts were there
Before our vision, your dear heart and mine,

And every face about us was a prayer.

OUR VISION (EGYPT)

Where dwell dead gods? Whither did Isis soar
On her bright vulture wings — the wings that we
Saw, plumed with sunset, overspread once more
Her Egypt of the Lily and the Bee?

SWINBURNE

Sea-wind and wave should chant thy requiem,
The harmonic surges toll thy passing bell;
For thou, hushed Poet, wert akin to them;
Thy songs alone their music parallel.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Fragrant thy name as the City of Flowers;
Sweet thy name as a song in the night;
Over all wonder of womanhood towers
Thy glory, white as the Cross is white.

THE RESEARCH LABORATORY

Science cannot blaspheme, for Science searches
The thoughts of God, the mystery of Cause.
These lonely halls are her authentic churches
Where patient toil adores Eternal Laws.

THE HARPER

The self-sufficing, perfect moon sat in the skies alone
Save for one star, a little page beneath her amber throne;
And yet it was the star whose harp made all the heavens
 glisten
With brother stars come stealing out from their blue tents to
 listen.

SO IT PIERCE THE CRUST

So it pierce the crust
That obscureth life's core of fire,
Welcome the thrust
Of the terrible Heart's Desire!

Though crucible break,
Shrink not from the alchemist's hour,
When he wills to make
From the shards of thine agony Power.

INSECURITY

I deemed this ravening grief long since was slain;
But yestermorn, as I went forth to reap,
Soft in his covert stirred mine ancient pain
And rose upon me with a tiger-leap.

DISILLUSION

It is when the eyes are aching
 With a passion of unshed tears,
It is when the heart is breaking
 For the vision that disappears,
It is when the harsh gate clashes
 On the sweetest hope we know,
Truth from the darkness flashes,
 And we welcome her even so.

THE KINGS OF THE EAST

I

The Kings of the East are riding
Tonight to Bethlehem.
The sunset glows dividing,
The Kings of the East are riding.
A star their journey guiding,
Gleaming with gold and gem
The Kings of the East are riding
Tonight to Bethlehem.

II

To a strange sweet harp of Zion
The starry host troops forth;
The golden-glaived Orion
To a strange sweet harp of Zion;
The Archer and the Lion,
The Watcher of the North;
To a strange sweet harp of Zion
The starry host troops forth.

III

There beams above a manger
The child-face of a star;
Amid the stars a stranger,
It beams above a manger;

What means this ether-ranger
To pause where poor folk are?
There beams above a manger
The child-face of a star.

EPIPHANY

'See the golden vessels the camels brought for thee
All the weary way of desert, steep and shore.'

But the Baby nestles on his mother's knee,
Peeping at the play of sunbeams on the floor.

'Tut! Is Heaven so simple? Every spice-wind blows
In this breath that rises from phials costly-sweet.'

But the Baby's dimple only comes and goes
As Mary's kiss surprises the rose leaves of his feet.

AT NAZARETH

A Little Child, a Joy-of-Heart, with eyes
Unsearchable, He grew in Nazareth,
His daily speech so innocently wise
That all the town went telling: 'Jesus saith.'

NOT THE CHRIST IN THE MANGER

Not the Christ in the manger,
Not the Christ on the Cross,
But the Christ in the soul
Shall save that soul
When all but love is loss.

THE HISTORIAN

It seemed a simple thing to write
 'Died, such or such a date';
But not so simple, not so trite,
 Himself to lie and wait.

LATE POEMS

ECCO IL SANTO

Seven centuries are counted
Since the soul of Francis mounted,
Led by Sister Death, the stair
To those Paradises where
Holiness is debonair.
Should he come again today,
Singing down the starry way,
Troubadour of God, the Lark
Of Assisi, would he hark
Happier laughter than he knew
When his carols shook the dew,
Under skies Madonna-blue,
From the twinkling olive-trees?
Oh, unshriven Centuries,
Fall before him on your knees!

But the Centuries stand proud
As Saracens, their heads unbowed.
'Friar, cord your faded gown;
Take your barefoot jog from town
On to town, as legend tells,
And adore our miracles.
We have made man lord of things;
Given him force that far outflings
Giant fables; given him wings;

Given him eyes that pierce like spears
The farthest flecks of light, and ears
That listen across hemispheres.
Marvel still on marvel follows.
Trudge along and preach to swallows.'

Like the Star of Bethlehem
Friar Francis smiles on them.
'So my Lady Poverty
Dwells no more on earth?' saith he.
'And my Brother Sun's glad glances
See no longer battle lances
Foam with blood? Old Craft and Greed
Do not gorge on cruel need
Of their fellows? Life is freed
From fear, for robbers cease to go
On dark errands? There is no
Wolf to trouble Gubbio?
Time assoils the wolfish heart
Of its sin and of its smart?'

Challenged by that Capuchin
The Centuries go phantom-thin
Till their waning gold is gray
As his worn frock. Melting away
Like sails on the horizon, they
Glimmer ghostly and are gone;
But the Dream glows on and on

In new dawns forever breasting
Fresh adventure, ever questing
Up the sky for purer day.
Time shall yet to Francis pray:
'Father, of thy courtesy
Print thy mystic wounds in me,
That I bleed and burn until
Life shall do Love's perfect will.'

THE LAME SHEPHERD

Slowly I followed on,
Stumbling and falling.
All the air sparkled;
All the air sung.
Even to my dull heart
Glory was calling.
Slowly I followed on,
Stumbling and falling.

Great wings arched over me,
Purple and amber;
Night was all color,
Night was all gleam.
Wearily up the hill
Needs must I clamber,
Though wings arched over me,
Purple and amber.

Proudly the chorus pealed
While I was panting.
Winds were all music,
Voices all praise.
Brooks, birds, the waving trees
Joined in the chanting.
Proudly the chorus pealed
While I was panting.

Late came my aching feet,
Late to the manger;
All slept in silence,
All dreamed in dusk
Under the same dear stars,
No star a stranger.
Late came my aching feet,
Late to the manger.

Kissing a baby's hand,
Painfully kneeling,
Sweet little drowsy hand,
Honey of heaven,
Swift through my twisted limbs
Glowed a glad healing.
Kissing a baby's hand,
Kissing and kneeling.

FOR DEEPER LIFE *

Dear God our Father, at Thy knee confessing
Our sins and follies, close in Thine embrace,
Children forgiven, happy in Thy blessing,
Deepen our spirits to receive Thy grace.

Not for more beauty would our eyes entreat Thee,
Flooded with beauty, beauty everywhere;
Only with keener vision that may greet Thee
In all Thy vestures of the earth and air.

The stars and rainbows are Thy wondrous wearing,
Sunlight and shadow moving on the hills;
Holy the meadow where Thy feet are faring,
Holy the brooklet that Thy laughter fills.

Not for more love our craving hearts implore Thee,
But for more power to love until they glow
Like hearths of comfort eager to restore Thee
Hidden in human wretchedness and woe.

In souls most sullen Thou art softly dreaming
Of saints and heroes wrought from Thy divine,
Pity and patience still the lost redeeming.
Deepen our spirits for a love like Thine.

* From the *American Student Hymnal*.

THE JUDGMENT

When before the cloud-white Throne
We are kneeling to be known
In self's utter nakedness,
Mercy shall be arbitress.

Love shall quench the very shame
That is our tormenting flame;
Love, the one theology,
Set the souls in prison free,

— Free as sunbeams forth to fare
Into outer darkness, where
It shall be our doom to make
Glory for each earth-mistake.

Not archangels God elects
For celestial architects;
On the stones of hell, the guilt
Of the world, is Zion built.

CELESTIAL PLAYGROUNDS

Not golden streets
In the Jerusalem my dream entreats,
But meadows where earth's truant children play
So close to God they hear the music-beats
Of His glad heart.
Fullness of joy
Forevermore shall be their sweet employ,
For these have brought no stains to wash away.
Love is their wisdom, love without alloy,
And love their perfect art.

Orphans who bore
War's cruelties, who knew of life no more
Than fright and famine, frolic in the sun;
Or rest among the daffodils before
The homes they missed.
Dear, perished pets,
Dog, pony, kitten no child heart forgets,
Are found again; the little cripples run
Races with cherubim, and no tear wets
A baby cheek unkissed.

Souls fresh from earth
Linger upon the fringes of that mirth,
While from the fair, twelve-fruited trees the thrush

Answers the harps, as if death were but birth,
And Heaven a toy.
And you, who lost
Your darling, wait to see a bright head tossed
Above some dancing group, to hear the rush
Of eager feet, to feel the clasp that cost
What anguish for what joy!

OLD LOVE

Young love is passion;
Old love is peace;
Such is love's fashion
Never to cease.
Young love's a carol;
Old love's a psalm;
Child love is wild love;
Old love is calm.

Young love is rapture;
Old love is rest;
Shy wings for capture;
Deep heart for nest.
Dawn love is silver;
Wait for the west;
Old love is gold love;
Old love is best.

VETERANS

FOR THE FORTY-FIFTH REUNION OF THE CLASS OF 1880
OF WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Under the sunset arch
Right merrily we march
To the same wild music that we loved at dawn.
Heads up and bugles blowing!
For the road that we have journeyed on
Into the dusk is going.

Lonely the way and steep,
But still our spirits keep,
While comrades fall, the company of God.
Hearts high and banners flowing!
For the road that all day long we've trod
On to the stars is going.

THE LABORING HEART

The laboring heart, near fainting in its task,
So painfully maintains the panting breath,
I watch the door and of the darkness ask
If the next comer shall be Sister Death.

She knows the latch. Has she not bent above
This bed and gathered for her roseleaf urn
The best that life has given me of love?
Wherefore my welcome waits her pledged return.

Yet still the question pulses through the weary
Watches of night, that old, importunate,
Futile, unanswerable, yearning query,
— From this my spirit what will Death abate?

If I am I, can I forget, beyond
All voids of being, autumn's burning trees,
The violet sheens of snow, May's magic wand
Of orchard blossoms dipped in fragrances?

Could I be I, forgetting those whose faces
Have been my stars? What phantom self would plod
On through eternity's vast hollow spaces,
Without the wings of love pursuing God?

COURAGE

*Faith and Hope and Charity!
Joy betide you, Sisters Three!
But your Elder Brother, Courage,
Is the Saint that walks with me.*

The azure wings of Faith arise
To touch the blue of kindred skies,
While over flint and shard
Courage, sturdy Courage,
Plods a pathway hard.

The leaflet-colored scarf of Hope
Waves from the height, while icy slope
And perilous crevasse
Challenge Courage, Courage
To pierce the Alpine pass.

Charity with open hand
Flings gold across the autumn land,
But for life's daily bread,
Courage, bleeding Courage
Stains the grains with red.

Faith and Hope and Charity!
Grace sustain you, Sisters Three!
But even while he faints,
Courage, Courage, Courage
Is my Saint of Saints.

POEMS IN MEMORY OF
KATHARINE COMAN

A MOUNTAIN SOUL

A mountain soul, she shines in crystal air
Above the smokes and clamors of the town.
Her pure, majestic brows serenely wear
The stars for crown.

The buzzing wings of folly, slander, spite,
Fall frozen in her alien atmosphere.
Her heart's at home with sunrise and with night
As neighbors dear

Who tell her ancient tales of time and law,
The miracle of love breathed into dust,
Until her sweet gray eyes are brimmed with awe
And steadfast trust.

Remote she dwells 'mid her celestial kin,
Rainbow and Moon and Cloud, yet none the less
Full many a weak earth-creature shelters in
Her friendliness.

She comrades with the child, the bird, the fern,
Poet and sage and rustic chimney-nook,
But Pomp must be a pilgrim ere he earn
Her mountain look, —

Her mountain look, the candor of the snow,
The strength of folded granite, and the calm
Of choiring pines, whose swayed green branches strow
A healing balm.

Oft as the psalmist lifted up his eyes
Unto the hills about Jerusalem,
Did not God's glory with a new surprise
Transfigure them?

That royal harper, passionate for rest,
Held one still summit dearest to his dream,
And only to the golden chords confessed
Its hour supreme;

For lovely is a mountain rosy-lit
With dawn, or steeped in sunshine, azure-hot,
But loveliest when shadows traverse it
And stain it not.

‘SHE IS THE GRACE OF ALL THAT ARE’

(Ben Jonson)

She is the grace of all that are,
The fragrancy of morn,
The wild, blithe ring, afar, afar,
Of Dian's horn.

She is the hidden carol in
The fringes of the wood,
The sudden blue when clouds wax thin,
The joy of good.

May God who wrought our fleeting race
Forbid her fatal star,
Remembering she is the grace
Of all that are.

THE VICTORY

The blue sky at its deepest was pricked by one keen star
That flashed a signal to the moon's uplifted scimitar,
And like a quarrel in a dream we spake with angry breath,
Till in that place of shadows our Love was done to death.

God hung the dawn with carmine and pillared it with gold
To welcome in our new Love, the angel of the old.
With lips still pale from requiems and litanies she came,
But home-sweet lights were in her eyes, — the same, and not
the same.

All that was mortal of her, the passion, the caprice,
We had wrapt in cloud-white linen and laid away at peace;
But the living Spirit stood within the temple of the sun,
Her agony accomplished, her consecration won.

AT HOLMENKOLLEN

Under our balcony twinkles
The capital city of Norway,
Christiania, toy-like
There in the shimmering spaces
Of her encompassing mountains,
Peeping one over the radiant
Shoulder or crest of another,
Called from their silver recesses
But to glisten and vanish
Back to the borders of Dreamland;
Christiania, only
An incident there in our vista
Of deepening, melting horizons,
Of soft green levels divided
By ranks of spruces and hemlocks,
And pines like tapering spires,
The austere grace of the Norland;
Of isle-flecked waters that chanted
Under the keels of the Vikings,
Where now like butterflies cluster
Tiny white sails and wee playboats
Feathered with smoke; ocean liners
Some of them are, but all dwindled
To elfin similitude under
The mighty enchantment that chastens

Christiania into an item
Of the beauty our balcony watches.

Yet we shall longer remember
The vast ethereal pageants,
Cloud-play and storm-sweep and rain-rush,
All the immense panorama
Of this ever-changeable sky-dome
The crystalline roof-tree of Odin,
Who gleams through his mist-woven curtains,
Who tosses his spear in the sunrise.
We shall remember the coast-fog,
Blurring, enfolding the landscape,
Suddenly shot through with sunshine,
Thinning and dazzling and lifting,
Rising on undulant pinions
Like a white sea-gull upsoaring
To be lost in cerulean distance;
And the moon that glowed like a ruby,
Like a hoarded great ruby the troll-folk
Roll to the feet of All-Father;
And sunsets like tapestry pictures
Of the first strange priest at Christ's altar,
Braving Thor's hammer, amazing
The sea-blue eyes of the pagans
That stare on his vestments embroidered
In gold and in seed-pearl with angels,
Roses of Sharon and crosses;

But longest of all, O Belovèd,
We shall remember the rainbow.

Bifröst the Rainbow, no gossamer
Scarf of a light-footed Iris,
Nay, but the bridge to Valhalla,
Fashioned by gods for the fearless,
Wrought of the blues of the zenith,
Greens of the sea-depth, and crimsons
Forged in the flame-core, forever
Guarded by white-armored Heimdall,
We of the Outlands have seen it,
Bifröst the Rainbow, and marvelled.
For fair it flashed out from the rain-veil,
Bright as if woven of banners,
Broad, like a highway for heroes,
Widening, melting, pervading,
Spreading through space, as our friendship
Colors all life into joyance,
Flooding the sky and the water
And earth with a quivering glory.

Let us be glad of the portent,
For the autumn winds are about us,
The blowing garments of Odin,
And the horn of Heimdall the warder,
Waiting white in the dusk-fall,
Shall blend with the winds in due season

Its unappealable summons.
Oh, then may we do no dishonor
To the hope we have trusted together,
The unbidden one speeding the chosen,
As the uncaressable spirit,
Joy-fellow, grief-fellow, beloved,
Fares forth alone for the final,
Valorous-hearted adventure,
Over Bifröst the Rainbow,
To the infinite welcome of God-home.

YELLOW CLOVER

Must I, who walk alone,
Come on it still,
This Puck of plants
The wise would do away with,
The sunshine slants
To play with,
Our wee, gold-dusty flower, the yellow clover,
Which once in parting for a time
That then seemed long,
Ere time for you was over,
We sealed our own?
Do you remember yet,
O Soul beyond the stars,
Beyond the uttermost dim bars
Of space,
Dear Soul who found earth sweet,
Remember by love's grace,
In dreamy hushes of the heavenly song,
How suddenly we halted in our climb,
Lingering, reluctant, up that farthest hill,
Stooped for the blossoms closest to our feet,
And gave them as a token
Each to each,
In lieu of speech,
In lieu of words too grievous to be spoken,

Those little, gypsy, wondering blossoms wet
With a strange dew of tears?

So it began,
This vagabond, unvalued yellow clover,
To be our tenderest language. All the years
It lent a new zest to the summer hours,
As each of us went scheming to surprise
The other with our homely, laureate flowers,
Sonnets and odes,
Fringing our daily roads.
Can amaranth and asphodel
Bring merrier laughter to your eyes?
Oh, if the Blest, in their serene abodes,
Keep any wistful consciousness of earth,
Not grandeurs, but the childish ways of love,
Simplicities of mirth,
Must follow them above
With touches of vague homesickness that pass
Like shadows of swift birds across the grass.
How oft, beneath some foreign arch of sky,
The rover,
You or I,
For life oft sundered look from look,
And voice from voice, the transient dearth
Schooling my soul to brook
This distance that no messages may span,
Would chance

Upon our wilding by a lonely well,
Or drowsy watermill,
Or swaying to the chime of convent bell,
Or where the nightingales of old romance
With tragical contraltos fill
Dim solitudes of infinite desire;
And once I joyed to meet
Our peasant gadabout
A trespasser on trim, seignorial seat,
Twinkling a saucy eye
As potentates paced by.

Our golden cord! our soft, pursuing flame
From friendship's altar fire!
How proudly we would pluck and tame
The dimpling clusters, mutinously gay!
How swiftly they were sent
Far, far away
On journeys wide
By sea and continent,
Green miles and blue leagues over,
From each of us to each,
That so our hearts might reach
And touch within the yellow clover,
Love's letter to be glad about
Like sunshine when it came!

My sorrow asks no healing; it is love;
Let love then make me brave

To bear the keen hurts of
This careless summertide,
Ay, of our own poor flower,
Changed with our fatal hour,
For all its sunshine vanished when you died.
Only white clover blossoms on your grave.

TO ONE WHO WAITS

I count the years by Junes that flush our laurel,
Our clustered bushes at the corner-wall,
And coax the crinkled buds to spread their small,
White chalices pricked out with rose and coral.
Slow are the seasons, yet I may not quarrel
With beauty. Dawns and stars, blossoms that foam
Enchanted orchards, where the orioles call,
Green leaves that flutter, golden leaves that fall,
Cloud caravans of snow will bring me home.
I count the years by Junes that flush our laurel.

What changes chronicle the life eternal?
Beyond the starry archipelagoes,
How do you calendar the stream that flows,
Forever singing, from the Throne supernal?
For as in wheat the sweetness of the kernel
Is ripened with the sunshine more and more,
Let sorrow trust, where mortal wisdom knows
Nothing, ah nothing, that the love of those
Who made earth, heaven is greater than before
And watches for us in the life eternal.

If human love be but the soul's rehearsal
For that high harmony so piercing sweet
Its rhythm is pulsing in the wildest beat

Of passion, in the quietest dispersal
Of household blessings, Love the universal
Music of being, must not, Dear and True,
Our love that longs in me still yearn in you,
New-christened at the wide-winged Mercy seat
To a redeeming grace, my Paraclete,
For the divine accord my soul's rehearsal?

I count the years by Junes that flush our laurel,
And you, perchance, in some shy interspace
Of Paradise, have found a woodsy place,
A bit of wild that welcomes fern and sorrel,
Where mystery of moss and prickly moral
Of briar-rose may spring in finer bloom,
And Time's old witchery so far presume
That you, impatient for the glad embrace,
May now and then a dewy footpath trace
To see if June again has flushed the laurel.

IN BOHEMIA

A CORONA OF SONNETS

I

I give you joy, my Dearest. Death is done,
Your martyrdom accomplished, and your crown
Of sainthood, woven of such pains as drown
Remembering eyes in tears, superbly won.
No stain upon your faith's white splendor, none;
No moment when you cast your courage down,
A broken sword. You enter with renown
Out of these shadows into radiant sun.
Gone, gone; yet still we pore upon your face,
Your face already strange in sculptured pallor,
Listening, but not to us; your face, a scroll
Frailer than parchment, where we yet may trace
A holy script. O loyalty! O valor!
Your voice still echoes: 'Bless the Lord, my soul.'

Your voice still echoes: 'Bless the Lord, my soul,
And all that is within me, bless His name!'
All, all within you? The disease, the shame
Let loose in your pure body sweet and whole
Beyond the wont of flesh, till evil stole
On those unconscious tissues, torment came
As furtively as some slow-creeping flame
Corroding from within the golden bowl?

Yea, verily, your body's bitter woe
In your divine endurance blessed the Lord.
Your youth of bounding pulses, one clear choir
Of joy and strength and glorious desire,
Could lift no strain of adoration so
Poignant, angelic, suffering's master-chord.

Poignant, angelic, suffering's master-chord,
Your music rings through my bewildered days,
A worship, and my spirit strives to raise
Thanksgiving with your own, above this horde
Of griefs, rebellions, yearnings. Oh, afford
From your rich joy, in your old, generous ways,
Largess to me, that my torn heart may praise
Death, even Death, your healing, your reward.
Death entered, bearer of the only key
That could unlock the iron gates of pain,
The Angel of the Lord, our very love
Knelt in his shining, as he smote the chain
From off your limbs, and swift you rose, set free,
Forever free. My heart, be glad thereof!

Forever free. My heart, be glad thereof!
It was heart's woe, Most Beautiful my Friend,
To watch your bright hair wither, shoulders bend
Beneath the burden. White as carrier-dove
Your numb, forgetful hand, an empty glove,
Lies on a quiet breast the hard gasps rend

No longer. From the broken cage ascend,
God's homing bird, to boundless air above.
Your joy shall be my joy, — ay, though the word
Chokes to a sob. My tragedy is done.
I could laugh upon the stroke even of Orion's
Great, gleaming sword, dull by comparison
With that keen pang unbearable that heard
Your only moan: 'My soul is among lions.'

Your only moan: 'My soul is among lions.'
You were on shipboard, sailing home to die.
I sat beside you on the deck; the sky
Glistened with constellations, starry scions
Of an eternal fire. Not white-hot irons
Could so have seared my spirit as that cry
From your deep anguish. You will know me by
That scar through joys of all imagined Zions.
You, you, so light to leap, so fleet to race,
Eager for burdens, I must see you shorn
Of all those ardors, slowly dispossessed
Of your proud heritage, turning your face
Toward Death, your face each dawn more wan,
more worn.

I could not make him an unwelcome guest.

I could not make him an unwelcome guest,
For that dim morning, when I raised the shade
Upon the joy of sunrise, you essayed

To look with eyes that pleaded but for rest,
So weary, O so weary. Peace was best.
Yet as Death hushed the breath, your love delayed
His touch an instant, while your white lips made
Effort to smile on me, a last behest
Of courage. Ah, such little time before
In panting torture you had lifted arms
To me for help I could not, could not give;
Yet in your utmost weakness, you restore
My fainting strength. Delivered from all harms
In your deliverance, Dear Heart, I live.

In your deliverance, Dear Heart, I live.
The olive cross you loved for Bethlehem,
Slipt under your chill hand, with lily stem,
Merges in your mortality. We give
Your tired beauty, wistful, fugitive,
To chariot of fire. Your requiem
Is chanted. Prayer and holy apothegm
Are uttered. All is ashes, where no sieve
Shall find forever form or face of you.
But in your upper chamber, in your own
Bohemia, wide-windowed to the sun,
We are together, all our suffering through,
Our long suspense and dread a shadow flown.
I give you joy, my Dearest. Death is done.

II

Our word shall still be Joy, shall still be Joy.
Death shall not be a frost that blackens all
The blossoms in our garden. Love, I call
To mind your life on earth, so to employ
My aching thoughts, lest lurking grief decoy
My spirit from its vow. And yet they fall,
Slow tears, on even this cramped, childish scrawl
Of hidden verses that you bade destroy.
Where is that child, with wide gray eyes of wonder
And broad braids yellow as the prairie moon
Whereon she gazed, suggesting with sage thrift
To cut it into stars would be a boon,
'Twould make so many? Ah, sweet childhoods, plunder
Of Time's fast wings, an April petal-drift!

From Time's fast wings, an April petal-drift
These songs have fluttered back, secretly penned,
A murmurous joy, deep in the leafy bend
Of silver-maple or in fragrant rift
Of haystack. Were these ten small leaves a gift
From Father's desk, this desk become my friend
As it was his and yours? Did Mother mend
With magic thread these rough-torn pages whiffed
Down half a century that changed the child
From form to form, a maid for men's desire,
Scholar with quarreling books about her piled,
Far traveller, sufferer, ashes on the pyre?

How fierce an anguish to the spirit brings
This mocking immortality of things!

The mocking immortality of things
Shall be forgiven to this tiny tome
For its dear childishness, — epic of home,
Ohio farm with joy of watersprings
And cedars full of crystal carollings;
Slow cows to drive and cosset lambs to comb;
Sheep deftly yoked to turn the garden loam
For labor-saving brothers; venturings
Of emulous fleets that sailed the orchard brook,
The proudest topped by mousetrap cabin where
A frog sat skipper with a pompous look.
Such hours are of their beauty unaware,
White daisies dancing in a meadow nook,
Till wistful memory beholds them fair.

Your wistful memory beheld them fair
And still more fair as further they receded,
Those childhood scenes dawn-colored and dew-beaded.
All needments but few luxuries were there
In that true home, — joyance of sun-steeped air,
Tasks bubbling into frolic, hearts that heeded
High voices, eager summer days that speeded
To tranquil twilights. Grouped about the chair
Where Mother with her mending took such rest
As mothers may, on doorsteps fronting west

Father and lads and lassies watched the strange
Drama of sunset, glimpsing crown and wing
And many a cloudy shape swift vanishing
By nature's mandate of eternal change.

By nature's mandate of eternal change
That group has melted, like those shifting gleams
Of air, a vision, one of many dreams
That haunt the levels of that lonely grange.
The soldier father was the first to range
Beyond the sunset, he whom war's extremes
Had wellnigh shattered, who from battle themes
Turned sharply, as from thoughts he would estrange.
The children's games of war he could not brook.
Their Shiloh with small fallen heroes woke
So deep a horror in his brooding look
They ceased to play at slaughter, yet no less
Joyed to behold him honored of the folk
For manhood, as his wife for graciousness.

Hers, when I knew her, was the graciousness
Of one long regnant on the quiet throne
Of love, — such love as tender children own
For parents whom the heavy years oppress;
Such love as she in turn poured back to bless
Their varying ways with steadfast music, known
From cradle-time as life's sweet undertone,
The mother-love, unfailing, measureless.

And forth from love there blossomed such high graces,
Courage and courtesy, joy, wisdom clear,
A fortitude forbidding all complaints,
That while she walketh now in heavenly places,
I think the very stars must hold her dear
And do her reverence as a queen of saints.

You did her reverence as a queen of saints
Many glad years together. When she passed
Beyond your touch, your faith still held her fast,
And as our human longing ever paints
Its Paradise with flush of earth, and faints
Before sheer spirit, so in that dread vast
You saw her waiting, loving arms outcast,
In the old happy doorway. What constraints
Were those that led your brother's questing feet
To even such homestead on a Berkshire hill
For your last summer? Winds across the wheat,
Frolic of calves, familiar farm employ
Closed up your circle, while our word was still
— O breaking hearts! — while still our word was Joy.

III

I could not bear my grief but that I must.
Is it not you who live, while I am dead,
Cold as that stone whereon the fire was red,
Now left alone to lichen or to dust?

'Thoughts of a Stone' your title has it, just
A bit of baby lyric, yet you said
What here I prove, — the campfire glows are spread
And trampled, picnic over, not a crust
Of joy dropt for the stone whence flames rose bright,
So bright it deemed itself a thing of fire.
And I must bear this grief night after night,
Day after day, through weeks and months and years,
This grief become myself, too dull for tears,
Bewildered past all pain, past all desire.

Bewildered past all pain, past all desire,
I stare forever on a snowy scene,
Blue glint of crusted drifts, the irised green
Of frost-filmed pines, impertinence of spire
And joy-lit panes, till shoot of anguish, dire
As crematory heats within whose keen
Embraces dies your beauty that has been,
Stings me to consciousness. Then I inquire
Of my forgotten senses, and I learn,
Noting accustomed walls and voices near,
I am no longer tranced in that return
From white Mount Auburn, where we left you, Dear,
— No, no, not you; a worn-out robe to burn,
Even as this globe shall gleam and disappear.

Even as this globe shall gleam and disappear,
My life has vanished, life of joy I led

Folded in yours. Never again to tread
The station platform, tired scrutineer
Of every face, until a sudden cheer
Tingles through all my veins, fatigue is sped,
For you are with me, sweet as daily bread,
Refreshing as cool water! Oh, the mere
Touch of your hand, your hand that now is ashes,
Turned all the day's vexations into mirth.
Beside you in the car, its groaning pull
And grinding brakes and harsh metallic crashes
Made blither music than remains on earth;
And yet I wonder I am sorrowful.

I wonder I am sorrowful, for now
There is no pain to fear for you. The sting
Of death is drawn. Escaped from suffering,
The crown of thorns is lifted from your brow.
I wonder I am sorrowful, for how
Can I be warped with winter, when the spring
Floods your free spirit, and its raptures wing
Your golden flight from our bare mortal bough?
Yet, Ever Dearest, I am sorrowful,
If apathy be sorrow. I receive
No joy of beauty from this snowflake wool
That wraps so tenderly each writhen tree,
Now that your tenderness is gone from me.
Stark selfishness of sorrow! Yet I grieve.

Stark selfishness of sorrow! Yet I grieve,
Vaguely aware of watchful loves that hold
Their warmth between me and the utter cold.
Patient and generous and wise, they leave
Me here alone with you and grief, yet weave
Sweet walls of roses round us, paly gold,
Soft pink, clear carmine, white, in manifold
Pattern of petals; mossy buds men thief
From Elfland, high-blown hearts of joy, tall stems
Crowned with great flushes. In our own rose-garden
We are together and I take reproof
From your dear voice that would not have me harden
My soul against such blessing. Love condemns
The sorrow that from love would walk aloof.

The sorrow that from love would walk aloof
Implores forgiveness even while it sins.
One heart is home; the many hearts are inns
With glow of festal joy, with sheltering roof.
Your life was of my life the warp and woof
Whereon most precious friendships, disciplines,
Passions embroidered rich designs. Grief wins
Pardon from love for very love's behoof.
For true love knows that love must still be true,
Not kind pretender nor blind self-deceiver.
It matters not what other mourners do;
I turn that nectar cup I drained with you

Down on the board. No more shall there be Weaver
Of Rainbows in my heaven's too tranquil blue.

No Rainbow Weaver in my heaven's calm blue;
The magic gate through which each common thing
Came shining with a strange transfiguring
Is sealed. Where now shall Grief keep rendez-vous
With Comfort? Nay, I would not learn the new
Who crave the old, — our water from the spring,
Not sacramental wine. The seasons bring
But phantoms of those joys that died with you.
Years pass. The household feasts your old-time guests.
A rose casts shadow on the cloth. Ah, thrust
Of hidden hurt amid the flying jests!
For that dark, silent image to my seeing
Is memory-ghost of your warm, fragrant being.
I could not bear my grief but that I must.

IV

Do you remember still your dear-loved earth,
Shadows of stormy clouds that sweep across
Old, castled Heidelberg; the golden gloss
Of sands atoning to the Sphinx for dearth
Of ancient splendors; strange Hawaiian mirth
At arbor feast, where, heedless of their loss,
Their vanishing, those blithe brown folk would toss
Wreathed heads to music, as if life were worth,

Even on such sliding brink, its hour of joy?
Do you remember how the sunsets burned
In Norway skies? Not pain itself could cloy
Your wild-bird heart that ever longed to roam,
That ever for the bluer distance yearned
And on each bough of beauty was at home.

God's bird, upon his every bough at home,
With skylarks on a Devon cliff between
The purple moors and purple sea, in green
Swiss valleys, in fair Florence, royal Rome,
Amid grim totem-poles by frozen foam;
Poplars of France that follow her serene,
Broad rivers; Andalusian groves, with sheen
Of orange and pomegranate, 'neath the dome
Of drowsy convent or above the game
Of choral children; bells of Brittany
Pouring their joyous gloria upon
The villagers, whose piety must don
To please the Saint their quaintest finery.
Horizons flushed about you when you came.

Horizons flushed about you when you came.
Our low skies lifted and the world looked in.
Joy-fellow of the journeying sun and kin
To that wind-god whose feet were plumed with flame,
Still, scholar, teacher, still your steadfast aim
Was understanding of the ways that win

Men upward from a blind, brute origin
To ordered peoples. Ever would you claim
That in our own crude country glows romance
Whereby the elder charm of Europe fades.
Falls of the Rhine you deemed Undine's dance
To great Columbia's thundering cascades,
Prophets that from her cloudy palisades
Summoned the pioneers to glorious chance.

The pioneers who took that glorious chance
You traced o'er plain and mountain, hunters, trappers,
Gold-seekers, prairie schooners with child-nappers
In mother's arms, babes whose inheritance
Of virgin land in limitless expanse
Was won by hero fathers, — daring tappers
Of earth's hid treasures, unconscious mappers
Of new dominions for mankind's advance.
Their courage beat like joy within your pulse.
Sleeping delicious hours of night away
On a Pacific beach 'mid shells and dulse,
Children beside you and a young moon beaming
Upon the surf that splashed you in its play,
Even then of their adventure you were dreaming.

Always of their adventure you were dreaming,
Retreading their hard paths and poring long
Over their crabbed scripts, with patience strong
As zest itself, until your mind was teeming

With frontier lore. I laughed to hear it streaming,
Untiring as the red-eyed vireo's song,
From lips folk called reserved nor did them wrong;
But silence had at last its full redeeming.
Your earlier volumes had but blazed the way
For this, your own heart's book, your joy of toil,
To be of all your glad achievement crown.
I watched the gold fruit ripening day by day
And felt your dream's incredulous recoil
When merciless disease would face it down.

Not merciless disease might face it down.
Through those four years beset with wasting pain,
The surgeon's knife again and yet again,
Our spring of joy slow withering to brown
Autumn of ruin, still your dream, like town
Stormed by resistless armies, would not deign
To lower its proud banner. So we twain
Finished your book beneath Death's very frown.
For all the hospital punctilio,
Through the drear night within your mind would grow
Those sentences my morning pen would spring
To meet, while guilty mirth flashed to and fro
From your brave eyes to mine, for joy and woe
As comrades climbed your height of suffering.

Joy climbed with woe your height of suffering.
Oft in your clouded eyes, as if soft-kissed,

Pleasure would brighten, banishing the mist
Of weariness, while from past journeying
Kind memory would many a picture bring,
Your Rockies robed in sunny amethyst,
Or that stupendous cañon, annalist
Of all the æons. To your heart would cling
Sweet, showery Aprils with their miracle
Of leaf and blossom, frozen nature's birth
Into fresh loveliness. Again the spell
Of Italy was on you and you smiled
As when you caught her songs from singing child.
Do you remember still your dear-loved earth?

V

Do saints go gypsying in Paradise?
How merrily, escaped from golden street
And jasper wall, your footsteps light and fleet
Would rove the wildwood — wood whose happy spice
And balm conceal no treacherous device
Of trap to snare and shatter small furred feet,
Where no shot bird beats broken wing! Oh, sweet
To taste a joy not bought by sacrifice!
Have you, as on Lake Ripley, bungalow
By water's edge, where from your sunrise bath
To twilight hymn the saucy chipmunks strow
Your floor with shells, scolding in frolic wrath
To see you sweep them forth? And up your path
What other heavenly callers come and go?

What other heavenly callers come and go
To hear your voice, my best of music hushed,
To rest beside the lake on ledges pushed
With moss and watch the tall marsh rushes blow,
Red-shouldered blackbirds flashing to and fro
Above the water-lilies, and the flushed
Breast of the robin guarding nest soft-brushed
By dancing linden leaves? Do cherubs know
Your welcome, as so many children here
Have known it? For you ever used to say
Their joy of laughter was your perfect cure
For weariness. You were so tired, Dear,
Before you died, please God that now with pure
Spirits of childhood you keep holiday.

Spirits of childhood, keeping holiday
On your broad steps that to the rippling lake
Descend, would call on Sigurd to awake
In his low grave. How could our collie stay
With earth, when you had fled so far away?
Our most adoring lover! For love's sake
The seal of death's enchanted door would break,
And Heaven be gladder for his winsome play.
With what a joyful plunge he would chase the stick
Flung forth into that little sea of glass!
How proudly swim with it to shore and flick
A crystal rain on scampering cherubim;

Then, well content, your hand caressing him,
Stretch on the threshold, greeting all who pass.

Over your threshold eagerly would pass
Your blessed dead, on furlough from employ
In that new life where service still is joy,
Parents and sister and the baby lass
Your arms once cherished, now in wisdom's class
So high 'tis hers to train with starry toy
And many a bright, angelical decoy
Your own celestial infancy. The grass
That never withers feels the drawing nigh
Of two dear brothers, yet unused to wend
The ways of Zion, but of instinct true
To find the violet path that leads to you,
And with the later fares a laughing friend
Whom Sigurd springs to meet with lyric cry.

Only for her he lifts his lyric cry,
Lady of Cedar Hill, yet proffers paw
Full cordially to all who, by the law
That brings our own to us at last, though sky
Must melt between, your threshold glorify,
— Our Pearl of Wellesley poets, who would draw
New dreams from Plato; Lincoln, not a flaw
Left on that beauty angels know him by;
Francis the Pitiful, and our vesper bell,
Christina, who while still on earth knew well,

Even as the psalmist king of Israel,
Heaven's joy of harping, — words of hers rose faint
From your pale lips, the last ere silence fell, —
And One with Whom your soul was best acquaint.

That One with Whom your soul was best acquaint,
The wandering Christ Who loved the cedar trees
Of Lebanon, the red anemones
Of Carmel, Whose low bidding put restraint
On stormy waves, Who fled from the complaint
Of hungering multitudes to shores like these,
Reeds shaken with the wind, may He not please
To come to you, His follower, His saint?
O Joys of Joys! Beatitude complete!
I see you kneel to anoint those wayworn feet
With ointment from your alabaster box
Of precious faith. But straightway doubt strikes chilly
Across the heart and my poor babbling mocks.
How may the earth-blind bulb behold the lily?

How may the earth-blind bulb behold the bliss
Of lilies, dance and color, odor, air?
Or iridescent wings their joy declare
To that dark prisoner in the chrysalis?
Thought reels before the metamorphosis
Of mortal to immortal. Lest despair
Rob us of strength for burdens yet to bear,
We tease God's inconceivable with this

Mere childishness of query upon query.
Have they no need of us who need them so?
Do they never, of eternity grown weary,
Long for the river-song of Time's onflow?
Can one tree, even the Tree of Life, suffice?
Do saints go gypsying in Paradise?

VI

No more than memory, love's afterglow?
Our quarter century of joy, can it
Be all? The lilting hours like birds would flit
By us, who loitered in the portico
Of love's high palace. Time enough to know
Its court decorum, nor would mind admit
Love's term of learning was not infinite.
Ah, courtesies my carelessness let go!
Then you forsook me ere my love was wise,
Not wise enough to know if still you are,
Too pure a light for my enshadowed eyes,
Or if, unconscious of my very grief,
Your vanished spirit, beautiful as brief,
Be quenched in darkness, like a shooting star.

Quenched in deep darkness, like a shooting star,
Or hidden as the moon within a cloud?
How often have we watched her, silver-browed,
Engulfed by gloom, and soon, upon its far,
Joy-brightened rim, emerge without a scar

On her pale splendor? Do you wear your shroud
So lightly? We but know that disallowed
To mortal vision is your avatar.

Nay, I must journey past all moons, all aid
Of these discarded senses, past all space
And peeling rhythm of time, ere I be made
Spirit to apprehend your spirit face;
Yet of this only is my soul afraid,
That you are merged in some transcendent grace.

If you are merged in some transcendent grace,
Drowned in divinity, ah, then no more
We are ourselves, no longer shall implore
The Power that rushes on its own proud race
Toward terrible perfection at a pace
So passionate that we who would adore
A Father are but bubbles on the roar
Of that tumultuous tide. If such strange case
Be ours, if unappealable decree
Make human love and joy and suffering
A whirl of autumn leaves, heart's mockery,
Speak it, O Science, with authentic voice,
And let us end it now. For who would cling
To such existence, serve such God, by choice?

I choose to serve my hope of God, a hope
Like to the shipwrecked mariner's, whose frail
Boat lurches while he leaps to calk and bail,
Make fast his water-keg with shred of rope,

Still searching, searching, dizzy eyes a-grope,
The blank of ocean for a saving sail.
Not his the fault if whelming seas prevail;
What courage can, he does. So would I cope
With our immensity of doubt, with all
This vast incertitude on which we toss,
Hoping, and striving in the hope I cherish,
Till nought remains to solace or appal.
If hope be truth, 'tis joy. If all be loss,
What matters it to life brought forth to perish?

To life brought forth to perish what is life?
Nought recks the field-mouse peeping from a loop
Of grasses that this evening may bring swoop
Upon him of the owl whose plaintive fife
We echo for our sport. No dread of knife
Troubles those sheep that sedulously droop
Their heads above the clover; even this group
Of calves frisk forth to market without strife.
Wild, pirate hawks cry loud above the caw
Of scandaled citizens, yet hawks and crows
Alike obey commandments that we call
Instinct. In joy the flood of being flows,
Each life the food of higher life, and all
Creatures of earth, sea, air accept the Law.

Why may not we in joy accept the Law?
Is thought a curse that we still chafe in vain,

One blind link more in an unending chain,
Against such doom? We see that children draw
Life from their parents; empires, wisps of straw
On a swift stream, swirl by that man may gain
A firmer basis for a nobler reign;
And yet we would extinction overawe
With our dim spark of God. Oh, what are we,
That in the face of all we witness, still
Clamor and cry for immortality;
Dare to withhold our puny homage till
Some oracle shall tell us if there be
A Will within the Law, and Love that Will?

O Will within the Law, O Love the Will,
To Thee I lift what faltering faith I may,
Longing allegiance fain its vow to pay
In Thy vast temple, but of little skill
To parley with Jehovah. Still, O still
Let her be my interpreter and pray
The prayer I cannot; let as yesterday
Her faith's clear fountain feed my wavering rill
O yesterday, and all its joy of you!
Just back from morning run, bright locks a-blow
About flushed face, such gladness gleaming through
Candid gray eyes as deepens them to blue,
Arms full of blossoming branches fresh with dew,
You come to memory, love's afterglow.

VII

Your sentence by my quavering voice was told.
Amazed, like the forsaken Christ, you viewed
The spectral shape of your appointed rood,
Even as when once autumnal mists unrolled
And gave you, unsuspecting, to behold
For the first time the Alps. Stricken you stood,
Awed, terrified at their bleak magnitude,
And shivered in the sunshine, smitten cold.
But straight you turned, so gallantly that God
Was proud of you, from ways you longed to wend,
From all your joy of life to this new goal,
Resolved to die with honor. Firm of soul,
Wresting a victory from defeat, you trod
Your Via Dolorosa to the end.

Your Via Dolorosa was mine own.
I walked beside you, far as love might go.
I saw, while mortal beauty dimmed, the glow
Of spirit brighten, till the soul had flown,
As birds at some cerulean bidding, known
Only to wings, fly south before the snow
To joy of summer. Left behind, below,
I wait till clouds of time be overblown.
Yet is there not a Way, a Truth, a Life
That my dull, darkened heart may reach you by?
Are not these walls, that watched your passing, rife
With mysteries that on me call and gleam?

Is it no more than pain's importunate dream,
Or do I sometimes feel your presence nigh?

Have I not sometimes felt your presence nigh?
You said: 'I will not leave you comfortless,'
And oft half conscious of a swift impress
Upon my spirit, lights that clarify
A problem, calm on storm, ever I try
To hold my listening heart in readiness
For joy of your impalpable caress,
Wisdom of your inaudible reply.
Oh, still shed blessing on me from those wings
Of whose soft tarriance I would be aware,
Light intimations, fleet evanishings,
Speech finer than all syllables, a rare
Shining within my soul, a thrill intense
That breaketh not Death's law of reticence.

It breaketh not Death's law of reticence,
For when I would my miracles declare
They melt as sunset colors in the air
Of evening, and myself oft wonder whence
Came to my heart that brief intelligence
Of a communion eyes and ears forswear
And touch denies. My ebbing joys despair
And charge imagination with pretense.
Is this my lonely camp by love patrolled,
Or am I fooled by credulous desire?

What hand throws balsam on my bivouac fire
When it burns low? Whose is the tender tone
That hushes grief with courage, as of old:
'We will be strong and glad in love alone'?

'We will be strong and glad in love alone.'
I can endure through all my desolate days,
But can I share your canticles of praise,
Your adoration at the Great White Throne
That rises for the pure in heart? Can moan
Mount up to singing? How shall summer raise
Beauty from these your ashes? Shall the maize
Ripen in gold where willow-herb was sown?
By seven springs has your far grave been grassed,
And in my depth of sorrow are astir
New powers, perceptions, joys, against my earth
Up-pressing, secret agonies of birth,
At bidding of their angel gardener:
'The Life Eternal! Let us hold it fast!'

'Let us hold fast the Life Eternal!' So
You bade me, so I strive, a better lover
Then I shall be a saint. Oh, starspace rover,
Would we might stroll once more, as long ago,
Startling the bobolinks, across the glow
Of Wellesley meadows lit by yellow clover
With 'God in all,' you murmured, and 'God over
All beauty and all joy'! For as I know

Your soul enfolding mine, you dwelt in Him,
Dwelt in the Light of God. How clearly fall
On memory your words, when once your breath
Waited the ether, and my eyes went dim!
'Oh, have no fear, Dear Heart, for life and death
Are one,' you smiled, 'and God is All in All.'

Forevermore is God your All in All.
In His eternal radiance you dwell,
Fulfilling His High Word as sunbeams quell
These earthly shadows. In your dying, gall
You tasted, felt the spear your flesh appal,
Were crucified with Christ, but it is well
With you at last in that bright citadel
Pain cannot storm, beyond the shining wall
Grief may not scale. That terror of all men,
The gate of gloom, is now your gate of gold.
Sore-tested, your heroic heart has won
The pearl of peace. More quietly than when
Your sentence by my quavering voice was told,
I give you joy, my Dearest. Death is done.

FROM THE HEALING OF TOBIT
A PLAY OF ASSYRIA

SOLILOQUY AND FAREWELL OF RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

SOLILOQUY

Oh, strange mortality! Its eagerness
About its wee concerns! These lives, as brief
As bubbles are, the many-colored bubbles
It pleaseth the High Dreamer still to blow
Into an instant's iridescence! Sparks
Of being, glints of glory, shimmerings
And vanishings of momentary empires
That pass even as the traces of a cloud,
Lost as the morning mist, as the remembrance
Of guest that tarrieth but a day, forgotten
As quickly as the sea forgets the path
Of keel, and air the flight of bird or arrow!
And this whole world, one whirling star amid
Myriads on myriads, is no more to time
Than drop of vesper dew; ay, Time itself
Is but a shadow slipping as men name it.

FAREWELL

RAPHAEL. My errand here is done. I may not tread
This dust again with you, blithe comrade. I
Am Raphael, of the Archangelic Seven,
The Seven Glories who go in and out
Before the unveiled face of God.

TOBIAS.

An angel?

Nay, nay, my brother, clad like me, like me
Loving the toil and beauty of the road.

RAPHAEL. An angel, therefore all the more your brother,
Even when clad in wings of wind and raiment
Of purple air with diamonds of bright rain.
Dear youth, how often shall you feel my touch
Upon your shoulder, as of old, and lift
An eager face to the invisible.

From waving mists my arm shall beckon you,
And when you long for me, I shall be there,
Always your helper. Call me and I come.

TOBIAS. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
I cannot attain unto it.

RAPHAEL.

Once more

Harken, and trust my words. Behold, I am
Of the Archangels, of the Shining Seven
Who have one only thought, one song, one deed,
To worship God.

TOBIT.

Tell us of God, our God.

RAPHAEL. He dwelleth in eternal light. He leads
The gleaming constellations up the sky.
The meteors and comets feel His hand
Upon their blazing reins.

ANNA.

But does He care

For foolish folk like us?

RAPHAEL.

He is the Lover

Of all that live. The spirits of all men,

Though far they stray, perverse, on lonely ways,
Are of His household, even as little children.
The forest brotherhoods, set free from terror,
Dwell in His garden, happiest when His feet
May walk among them. He is Lord of all,
The tame, the wild, the souls of those that fly
In the glad air, that swim in the glad waters,
That graze in the glad fields. The flowers whose
tints

Are dear to Him, the trees His psalmodists,
The curious, shy denizens of ocean
From proud leviathan to living towers
Of coral, even down to those dim growths
Still unaware of being, all rejoice
In their Creator, worshipping His law
With that best worship of obedience.
In every life He lives, urging it upward;
The reptile rises to the bird; the wolf
Becomes the collie, guardian of men's flocks;
The criminal ascendeth to the saint.
The sweetness of His law excels all sweetness;
To do His will is Paradise.

TOBIT, ANNA, TOBIAS.

Tell on.

RAPHAEL. I am Raphael, the Healer of the Earth,
Sent forth of God to comfort human hearts
And cure them of their griefs, for He is mindful
Of man, whom He hath made but little lower
Than us His angels and hath crowned with honor.

The bright, imperishable, singing spheres
Look wistfully on man, who falls to rise,
Whose soul was kindled at the central fire
And, burning wildly in the winds of earth,
Is yet divine.

TOBIT, ANNA, TOBIAS. Lord Raphael, tell on.

RAPHAEL. My task it is to heal the troubled earth
With reverence, with law, with lovingkindness,
Purge it from greed and envy, falsehood, scorn,
Hate, cruelty, and all the brood of hell.
When martyrs in the fiery furnace walk,
I walk beside them and I cool the flames.
'Tis I present the prayers of saints before
The Throne of God; the prayers of Tobit poured
Their fragrance from the censer I uplifted,
Blent with pure fragrance from the prayers of Sara.

TOBIT. Our Helper!

ANNA. Comforter!

TOBIAS. Abide with us!

RAPHAEL. I shall be with you, as I have been with you;
Your eyes have seen no man, only a vision.
Farewell, for I arise to Him that sent me.
Swifter than those four steeds that down the air
Hurtle the splendid chariot of storm,
The Wind, the Rain, the Sleet, the Lightning,
swifter
Than hope and fear and dream and death I speed
At the great bidding unto souls in sorrow;

But that keen flight is slow to my return
To Him whose essence draweth up mine own,
Even as the Sun draws up the dew. Farewell.
The clouds allure me and the ether calls me;
The pathways of the stars are lighted for me;
I bear your adoration up to God,
Beyond the pillars of the crystal heavens,
The chambers of the hoarfrost and the snow,
The stalls wherein the thunder-steeds are lodged,
Each ruled by its firm bridle of command;
Beyond Arcturus and his sons, beyond
The golden treasures of the Pleiades,
Armored Orion and the mystic river
That mortals, marvelling, call the Milky Way;
Beyond the azure, star-embroidered veil
That the four seraphs weave between your world
Of space and time and our eternity.
On to the place where no flesh walks, I bear
The breath of your thanksgiving, on and on,
Beyond all hunger, thirst, and pain, and terror,
To the upper heavens whose palaces gleam out
With pinnacles and columns of sheer flame,
To that high dwelling, unconfined and clear,
Whence God looks forth on all His circling globes,
Shaping their shining destinies. And you,
You who have known the dimness and the dark,
Shall yet behold those walls that are no walls
But iridescent glow of jewels, praising

Our God with dancing color, even as life
Best praises Him with beauty, joy and love.
Glory to God!

TOBIT.

To God!

ANNA.

To God!

TOBIAS.

To God!



